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MARCH 23, 1984

The bishops & the politics of abortion

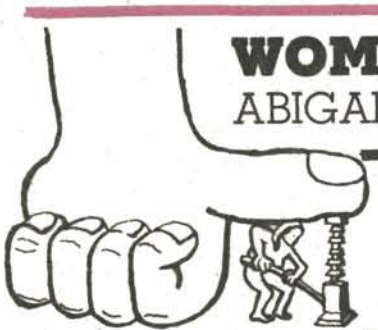
MARY MEEHAN
with comments by
DAVID N. O'STEEN
PHYLLIS ZAGANO

THE EDITORS The bishops & their right-to-life critics

DAVE ANDRUSKO The anti-anti-abortionists

BARBARA HILKERT ANDOLSEN 'Our Right to Choose'

CARLENE B. HILL A question of honor



WOMEN & THE ECONOMY

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

By way of farewell

JAMES O'GARA

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Correspondence

King & the FBI

Atlanta, Ga.

To the Editors: Lawrence Hogan's comparison of Lech Walesa and Martin Luther King, Jr. (Dec. 16, 1983) provided interesting insight into their home countries' reactions to the work of the two Nobel Peace Prize laureates. For a fuller treatment of the FBI's covert surveillance of Dr. King, readers should consult David Garrow's 1981 book, *The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr.*, rather than the recent Oates biography. Garrow's is the only work which is based on direct access to the FBI's own files, obtained under the Freedom of Information Act.

D. LOUISE COOK
Director, King Library and Archives
The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center

War is innate

Sloatsburg, N.Y.

To the Editors: While John Garvey is undoubtedly correct as regards the central theme of his essay, i.e., that the U.S. is "Gearing Up for War" (Jan. 13), there is a possibly much more important matter touched upon in the article, to the effect that war is a result of the actions of the state, or a "whim" of the state. My feeling, however, is that the state is a historic outgrowth or artifact of war, rather than the other way around. In other words, I am saying that it was the legions that produced the Roman Empire, not the reverse.

My view implicitly assumes that war is the natural condition of mankind (the gender distinction is deliberate, as I am not sure that this statement holds true for women). But as for men, as far back as history and pre-history take us, we see them organizing themselves into bands and attacking other bands or tribes. The state grew out of these activities, and ever since the organization of even non-martial institutions (bureaucracy, church, corporations) all copy the military model with captains, lieutenants, non-commissioned officers, plain soldiers.

If my premise is correct, it could be attributed to original sin, or to the imperatives of biological survival (which may after all be the same thing), but it is hard to deny that the thrust towards war seems innate in man. There may be saints among us who resist this trend, but they are few indeed. Rarely if ever are wars ended by saints (or pacifists) but rather by victory or defeat on the field of battle.

If I am correct, and a predilection towards war is innate in the race, and given the potency of today's weapons, the extinction of humankind would appear almost inevitable, barring divine intervention.

NORMAN D. ARBAIZA

Rites of affirmation

Newport, R.I.

To the Editors: It was a pleasure to read Eleanor B. Wymard's article on the novels of Barbara Pym (Jan. 13). Philip Larkin has aroused interest in this "most underrated English novelist" of our century, and Wymard now offers seminal criticism on the existentialist mood of Pym's work. Indeed, Wymard's essay is itself a penetrating approach to the characters of Pym from an existential psychological point of view.

As Wymard points out, Pym's novels are much more than "well-crafted" entertainments. What she observes in Pym is her characters' responses to the crises of modern life which are "terrible whatever sort of front one might put on them." Simple rituals of daily life are seen as a way of keeping faith with life itself, of discovering one's rites of affirmation in a world in which structured social systems cannot overcome the isolation of the individual.

Wymard finds in Pym's novels an affirmative response to the existential temper of our world achieved through a willingness of "ordinary" people to make personal choices in confronting the terms of their own lives.

Perhaps Wymard's sensitive insight into Pym's characters is related at least partially to the fact that most of them are women. Henry Adams once remarked that literature would never reveal the depths of female characters until women wrote profoundly about themselves. Wymard's unique response of a woman critic to a woman artist gives us an original interpretation of Pym's novels which promises exciting developments in the future.

KATHLEEN HEALY, R.S.M.
Visiting Professor of English
Salve Regina —
The Newport College

Grenada a just war?

Cary, N.C.

To the Editors: Father Bryan Hehir in his article "The Case of Grenada (Dec. 16), neglects to apply the principles of the "just war theory" to the invasion of Grenada. The omission is puzzling in that Father Hehir was a participant in the writing of the U.S. bishops' pastoral on war and peace. The military action against Grenada was the first undertaken since the writing of the pastoral. It appeared as an opportune moment to give force and meaning to the pastoral letter.

The taking of life, the use of military force, should only occur when life is threatened; war is a last resort. I do not think this was the case in the invasion of Grenada. I do not think the invasion was undertaken with due authority; presidents cannot unilaterally declare war without the consent of Congress. I believe the principles of the just war as outlined in the pastoral letter were violated. In "The Case of Grenada" it

(Continued on page 190)

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ABORTION, POLITICS, & THE BISHOPS

FOR OVER A DECADE, the American Catholic bishops have been under attack because of their role in opposing abortion. Most of that criticism has come from advocates of ready access to abortion, some of whom were quite happy to dismiss all right-to-life pressures as emanations of inquisitorial Catholic authority. Some of the criticism has come from Catholics convinced that the bishops had imprudently chained their anti-abortion teaching to political support for a constitutional ban on all legal abortion. And some of the criticism, little noticed by the media, has come from the right-to-life movement itself.

Pace many pro-choice publicists, the right-to-life movement has never been a puppet of the Catholic hierarchy. On the contrary, it has been a genuine grassroots social movement — with all the problems which that entails. It has been kept going by militants, not a few of them relatively new to political organizing. Like any social movement organized around a moral issue, it has dealt uneasily with political compromise and suspiciously with those who are less singleminded about its goals. Inevitably it has attracted a fringe of extremists — a few advocates of violence, a greater number of *simplificateurs* who reduce complex human reality to a few either/or slogans. The civil-rights movement had its gun-toting revolutionaries and militant separatists. The anti-Vietnam war movement had its campus bombers and devotees of Ho Chi Minh's Communism. It may not be difficult for leaders of social movements to condemn the outrages that clearly discredit their own goals; it is more delicate, however, to dampen the wilder rhetoric without either denying the shared passion behind it or introducing unproductive dissension into the ranks.

All this suggests why the relationship between the bishops and the right-to-life movement has never been without its tensions. Even before *Roe v. Wade* some abortion opponents were dissatisfied with the church's leadership, suspecting it of hankering after "respectability" or of giving first political priority to more immediate institutional objectives like aid to parochial schools. After *Roe v. Wade* and the 1975 Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities, when the church began to systematize its anti-abortion involvement, some pro-lifers complained that their independent initiatives were being reined in. No doubt there were bishops and priests, aware of both the philosophical and pastoral complexities of abortion, who did discourage the crusading spirit. And since the right-to-life movement did draw heavily, although not entirely, from the ranks of conservative Catholics, the inner-church conflicts over post-Vatican Council changes added an extra dash of tension.

The 1980 election complicated matters further. Anti-abortion sentiment was already dominant in the House of Representatives. Now it had supposedly captured the White House and possibly the Senate too. A bright lawyer concocted a way of challenging *Roe v. Wade* that only required a majority in Congress instead of the two-thirds needed for a constitutional amendment. Then the momentum stopped.

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The administration proved more interested in reducing taxes than in reducing abortions. Economics pushed abortion into the shadows in the mid-term election. But there was also the question of the bishops' political strategy — first, their hesitance about the statutory maneuver that would skirt the need for a two-thirds anti-abortion majority; second, their endorsement of a compromise constitutional amendment that would overturn *Roe v. Wade* without really banning abortion, an amendment which, in the event, proved to have little more chance of immediate passage than an unqualified ban.

These are the developments behind the debate in this issue of *Commonweal*. But let it be noted that the bishops' position was shared by quite a number of other opponents of abortion, this journal included. A good bit of the debate is therefore no less relevant to them and us than to the bishops. More important, the discussion, though turning on specific judgments in recent Washington politicking, raises again the larger questions about the church's proper role in seeking social change through political involvement.

The complications in the relationship between the bishops and the anti-abortion effort did not end with the frustrating wake of the 1980 election. Two more elements were added to the brew. The first was the pastoral letter on nuclear arms. The controversy surrounding the pastoral, pitting proponents against administration spokesmen and loosing charges that the bishops were in the grip of an ultra-liberal staff cabal, fed pro-life suspicions that the hierarchy might edge away from the abortion cause. In the letter itself the bishops tried to make clear that this was not the case. Nonetheless, the pastoral did in fact raise problems of a more subtle kind. The very complexity and delicacy of the nuclear issue compelled the bishops to emphasize what had long been sound theological teaching: that Catholics might agree on general moral principles while loyally and even vigorously disagreeing on the many intervening factual and prudential judgments needed to translate those principles into public policy. Of course, in practice, that was exactly what American Catholics were accustomed to doing; they had never marched in political lockstep with their bishops. But now the question was more easily asked: why should they not be any less free to disagree with the bishops on the human life amendment or the Hatch amendment than on the nuclear freeze or "no first use"? At least some pro-lifers felt that the stamp of approval the hierarchy had given their political efforts was being further discounted by the limits on episcopal authority that the pastoral letter had merely pushed to the fore. In addition, those pro-lifers subscribing to the New Right's enthusiasm for the Reagan arms buildup — and this included the Moral Majority forces that had belatedly joined the anti-abortion ranks — simply didn't like the pastoral at all. Just as it complicates things for pro-choice liberals to have to denounce the bishops for "imposing morality" in regard to abortion while quoting them on Central America, the death sentence, and the arms race, it confuses New Rightists to have to welcome the bishops' moral leadership on abortion while considering them dupes and knaves on economic and international problems.

Toss in one more ingredient — Cardinal Bernardin's proposal that the American church articulate and defend a consistent and comprehensive moral vision embracing a broad range of "life" issues including abortion, nuclear war, capital punishment — and even "support of the quality of life of the powerless among us." Given the existing suspicions, it is not surprising that some right-to-life activists reacted negatively. Was the cardinal trying to "smother" the church's anti-abortion position amidst a host of other concerns? Was he demanding that pro-lifers abandon effective political coalitions which could not survive an attempt to seek agreement on a broad platform that included arms control and the death penalty? On many of these points, Cardinal Bernardin has tried to reassure pro-lifers, but the discussion continues.

Of course there will be no mollifying at least one segment of that audience, and Cardinal Bernardin and the bishops who agree with him ought simply to resign themselves to that fact. No less than the cardinal, these right-to-lifers see abortion as part of a "seamless garment" of issues. For them, however, the linking vision is not an agenda of "life" issues but the across-the-board defeat of modern liberalism with its toleration of open debate on fundamental values and its challenge to traditional social roles and inequalities.

Cardinal Bernardin and his fellow bishops will also have to face the argument that abortion is a *present* holocaust while nuclear war is a potential *future* one — and that therefore the former should be the controlling priority. The fact is that the *only* time to prevent nuclear holocaust is before the missiles start flying. Both concerns have an urgent claim on our energy; the demand to "prioritize" — or hand out voting instructions according to such priorities — should be resisted.

A BASIC FACT about the struggle over abortion is that it will continue for a long time. However frustrating that may be to those who observe the daily destruction of life, such is the case. That is why the bishops were largely right in supporting the Hatch amendment, whatever reservations one may retain about their formal endorsement. Morally, the church should proclaim the sanctity of human life from its very early stages. Politically, it should simply try to reopen the public debate that *Roe v. Wade* effectively curtailed. To demand a legal ban on virtually all abortions now is simply to leap far ahead of too much conscientious public opinion, and to add the burden of defending exceptional government coercion to the already difficult task of persuading a throw-away society to value the easily disposable lives that disrupt our own hopes for the future, especially when those disruptions can be genuinely tragic.

It is also because of this long-range perspective that abortion opponents must refuse to play fast and loose with our constitutional framework or with the basic demands of civil discourse that hold our society together. Both pro-lifers and pro-choicers have been all too ready to fasten on extreme expressions of the others' position to justify their own case — and overlook their own weaknesses. Hard politicking will have to continue; no one should doubt it. But because Cardinal Bernardin's ap-

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proach cuts across so many existing ideological preconceptions, it promises to keep at least pro-life Catholics from a dangerous self-righteousness.

Finally, it is ironic that conservatives have balked at the cardinal's proposal — although, in fairness, a good number have welcomed it. With some justice, conservatives have made the point that the church has recently been too concerned with political activity, too neglectful of educational and spiritual leadership. The bishops are going to have to give far more attention not only to telling Catholics themselves that the church opposes abortion but why. And most of all they are going to have to create the kind of Christian community that itself *embodies* a treasuring of life, that challenges, in its daily existence, the very idea that human beings could be "unwanted." That, more than any amount of lobbying, any number of arguments about the moment of conception, will convince fellow Americans. In this respect, too, Cardinal Bernardin's proposal holds out great hope.

From the Editor

BY WAY OF FAREWELL

A PERSONAL NOTE

IN JANUARY I completed thirty-two years at *Commonweal*, roughly half as Managing Editor and the other half as Editor. In this period I figure I wrote between 750,000 and 1,000,000 words in editorials, articles, and in the weekly column I did for a few years. On the side I wrote a number of religious documentaries for television, served as general editor for a series of religious books, for a period did a great deal of lecturing around the country, wrote a few articles for other magazines, and for four years managed to teach sociology at Fordham University a couple of evenings a week and on Saturday morning. It has been a good if somewhat hectic three decades, but it is time, I think, to step down, while I am still physically up to doing other things and while I have an able colleague, Peter Steinfels, to whom I can turn over the Editor's chair. This issue will be the last one, therefore, with my name at the top of the masthead.

I was a youngish married man with two children when I moved from Chicago to New York to be Managing Editor, and the move was not carried out without trepidation on my part. We were leaving the city where my wife Joan and I both were born and grew up, and where we had relatives and many friends. *Commonweal* salaries have never been much to brag about, and in those days they were even less so. Shortly before I came, Edward Skillin felt he had to warn me that the magazine was in even shakier financial condition than usual, and this news was nerve-producing. Urged on by Joan, I decided we should come anyway, and here I am in 1984. As the joke has it, I knew the job would never last.

Need I say I was very proud to be asked to join *Commonweal*'s staff? There was no place else I would sooner have worked. While I was in Chicago I wrote regularly for the magazine, and *Commonweal* stood for something in the American church that I was proud to identify with. The Irish West Side of Chicago where I grew up was not without its virtues, but an intellectual oasis it was not. It seems easy for some to forget how much desert there was in the pre-Vatican church, but I cannot help but remember. And in that desert *Commonweal* was often a lonely voice crying out on behalf of human rights, of ecumenism, of interracial harmony, of social justice, of intellectual integrity.

From the time I was old enough to begin to develop some opinions of my own, I have always been what used to be called a "*Commonweal* Catholic," as I'm sure many of our readers are too. The term was originally coined by our critics as a denigrating description, to indicate someone whose theology was shaky at best and whose loyalty was dubious, but I never took the term that way. To me the expression meant one who had a definite commitment to the church but who was not sectarian in spirit. The commitment of the "*Commonweal* Catholic" was — and is — to a church that was open and pluralistic, not rigid and authoritarian, a church that was the visible manifestation of Jesus's presence in the world. Thus I saw the description intended to be derogatory as a badge of honor, something to be lived up to, and I still feel the same way today.

THIS, OF COURSE, was not the way our critics saw things — not by any means. All of us who served here have scars to show for it. I remember, for instance, an anonymous leaflet produced by some faceless person or group which denounced me as a "red Communist fink"; one Sunday early in my life here this was distributed after every Mass at my parish where my children attended the parochial school. Not one of the highlights of my life.

The climate was stormier then, in my earlier days here. The magazine was consistently scornful of Senator Joe McCarthy and his phoney crusade, and I remember a letter we received shortly after Bishop Bernard Sheil of Chicago gave a talk also denouncing the junior senator from Wisconsin. Said the letter, simply, "May Bishop Sheil and the editors of *Commonweal* burn in hell for all eternity." As one of my friends pointed out when he saw the letter, at least it was signed only "Sincerely yours," not "Sincerely yours in Christ."

Then there was the verdict pronounced by the at that time

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right-wing *Brooklyn Tablet* and which the New York diocesan *Catholic News* picked up and boxed on the front page: "The editors of *Commonweal* are not fit to be called Catholic." I won't deny that this stung, perhaps especially my dear friend John Cogley, then Executive Editor.

But there were consolations too, and the picture was not unrelievedly dark, even in the worst days of the McCarthy era. I remember, for example, one Monday after a particularly vicious attack on us by the *Brooklyn Tablet*; there in the mail was a substantial check from the archbishop of Brooklyn, Thomas E. Molloy. It was, we gathered, his way of saying that he did not share the views of his own diocesan paper and its lay managing editor, Patrick Scanlan.

Over the years there have been many similar encouraging happenings. If some Catholics, including some bishops, did not like us, we always had many friends including bishops who did. Among the nicer things that have happened to me in recent years, I count an honorary doctorate from my own alma mater, Loyola University of Chicago, where in younger days I taught sociology and Catholic social thought — by coincidence, my successor Peter Steinfels attended the same university many years later.

THERE IS no doubt that the climate of opinion in the church has changed drastically since the 1962-1965 Vatican Council. That council brought many things to pass that *Commonweal* had been arguing for since 1924, from the Mass in English to greater lay participation and an enlarged conception of the church as a church of service rather than a church of privilege. Nowadays, with such goals won at least in theory, we at *Commonweal* are much more respectable than we used to be. Don't worry, though; we can easily blow that any editorial day and probably will.

A lot of things have happened inside the church as a result of Vatican II. This should not blind anyone to the fact that some very real problems loom ahead. I agree with the esteemed Monsignor John Tracy Ellis that the church is going through its greatest crisis since the Reformation. One problem that stands out is the sharp decline in priestly and religious vocations; there are something like one-fourth as many young men in seminaries as there were two decades ago, and women religious in the U.S. have declined in number from about 180,000 to 120,000. Some observers say one has to see the silver lining in that black cloud; the situation will, they say, lead to greater lay participation and responsibility. Maybe, but at a time when we need more and smaller parishes and increased educational efforts, I am not convinced.

As far as the priesthood goes, I agree with those who say the pope and the bishops must take a hard look at the criteria for who should be ordained. How really sound are the reasons for restricting ordained priesthood to life-time celibate males? As for the women religious, the worst way I can imagine to promote vocations is to harass them, as the Vatican seems intent on doing.

Concerning the laity, there are also plenty of critical issues. First, a two-sided problem for those who would like to share more responsibility inside the church. As far as I can see, for every bishop and priest who really welcomes lay participation and responsibility in more than a nominal way, there are at least one other bishop and priest who reject it. And on the other side, these clerical refuseniks are matched by lay people mired in deep apathy who could not care less about participation. And there is even a bigger problem, the lack of regard for a genuine lay vocation. There are lectors and married deacons and extraordinary ministers and various kinds of churchly ministries, but how much respect is there for the layman's real work in his secular milieu? And as one whose background lies in Catholic Action in Chicago, it seems to me there are no current equivalents of things like Chicago Inter-Student Catholic Action (CISCA), the Young Christian Students, the Young Christian Workers, even of the somewhat frenzied Summer Schools of Catholic Action originated by Father Daniel A. Lord, S.J. and which drew young people by the thousands. Marriage encounter groups are all very well, but what do we have for young people searching for a direction in life?

While I am complaining, what about that ever more present phenomenon Andrew Greeley calls the "communal Catholic"? Such individuals may be able to retain their Catholic values with little or no involvement with the institutional church, but I doubt that their children will. Add to the communal Catholic the (literally) millions of divorced Catholics who have married again "outside the church," and it seems a poor time to discourage would-be priests of either sex, married or single; to discourage nuns in their indispensable work; or, even worse, to further antagonize already antagonized American Catholic women who are told they can't even see a girl serving on the altar.

BUT I DON'T want to be a Gloomy Gus. There are plenty of bright patches in the cloudy ecclesiastical sky. Thank God for the Vatican Council; there at last the church stopped seeing itself as a beleaguered fortress and began to confront modernity. If there have been fallings-away, it may well have been because for many the faith of pre-Vatican II was shallow, formalized. I remember a nun I had in grammar school who managed to combine anti-Semitism and bad theology when she said to us, "I am a bit of a Jew when it comes to praying; I only say prayers with the highest number of days of indulgence." It is unlikely that Catholic children would hear such a thing today.

For a significant number of Catholics, lay, clerical, and religious, the faith is deeper and their practice more vital than ever. And the most welcome change has been in the attitude toward the world. As the concepts of Vatican II spread, people inside the church, lay and cleric alike, have started to turn away from the conception of the church as a static institution which exists primarily to maintain its own existence. The church is seen increasingly as a church that exists to serve others. We still have a good way to go on this, but a start has been made.

The way I see it, Vatican II's basic intuition lies precisely in this: in seeing the essence of the church in its mission of service

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to the world, of saving the world in its totality, of serving it in history, here and now. The church has problems since Vatican II, but nothing to compare with what problems there would have been if the council had not taken place. Sooner or later, the social evolution of Catholics to full economic and educational status would have meant a crisis, the problem of facing the intellectual challenge of the modern world.

AS FOR THE WORLD the church is here to serve, plenty of changes have taken place there too. Since John F. Kennedy, a qualified Catholic probably would not have any special problem getting himself elected president of the United States if he were brave enough or foolish enough to want that awesome job. That's a plus. The bad thing — the worst thing — is the most obvious: the arms race and the ever worsening nuclear confrontation between the superpowers. Here I don't think the U.S. is blameless by any means.

From the days of my youth, when I was involved in organizing a CIO union, I don't think I have suffered any illusions about the Communists or the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, in the Reagan years especially, it seems to me that many of our offers in arms negotiations have been self-serving and self-defeating. The way things are now, both sides are making proposals for the front pages that they know will be turned down. This is crucial. In comparison with nuclear confrontation, all other issues fade into insignificance.

And that brings me to the bishops' pastoral on the topic, about which I am enthusiastic. The pastoral could have been leaden and lifeless; it is not. It could have been simplistic and moralistic; it is neither. Instead it is readable, moral, nuanced, balanced — all in all, deserving of the compliment of the right-wing attacks it has been receiving. A special word of praise should be added for the way the pastoral was prepared. It was made ready in draft after draft, written and rewritten after long and extensive consultations with experts and lay people from all over the country. In this it was a model for how such letters should be prepared, and I hope none is written any other way in the future.

There have been a lot of other developments in the last thirty years, many of them to the good, at least if you forget about things like Vietnam and El Salvador. Take as simple a thing as food stamps, for instance. Since the current administration took over, there has been a lot of abuse directed at this and other social programs, but the central fact remains: there are hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children who are not going to bed hungry tonight because of these programs, just as there are hundreds of thousands who are getting badly needed medical care because of Medicare and Medicaid. With all the flaws of such programs, in a complex society like ours what are they but ways we have devised to carry out the works of mercy? The Catholic Worker can house a few dozen people in each house of hospitality, but a young New York lawyer inspired by the movement could also go to court on behalf of the homeless sleeping on the city's grates and in the subways. The result: New York and other urban areas around the country must now provide shelter not for dozens every night but literally for thousands. Government does have a definite role in social and economic life.

On that positive note I will end, with best wishes to all my readers, to the *Commonweal* Associates, and to all my colleagues, past and present. It has been a good thirty-two years, blessed as they were in the kind of people I have worked with and in the experiences I have had, including a certain amount of foreign travel and reporting, which I dearly love. As for the future, in September my wife and I will go to St. John's, the Benedictine university in Collegeville, Minnesota; there I will spend an academic year as a Fellow at the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research, pursuing a project in Catholic social thought, always a favorite topic of mine. After that I will be open to whatever interesting retirement projects that may turn up. So thank you again and goodbye for now.

JAMES O'GARA

(James O'Gara was Managing Editor of Commonweal *from January 1952 to May of 1967 and Editor from that date till the present.)*

Of several minds: *Abigail McCarthy*

FACING THE FACTS

THE ECONOMICS OF WOMEN

GETTING OUT and meeting the voters is supposed to be a salutary exercise for office-holders and candidates. Going about on the lecture circuit can be equally so for those of us who sit at the typewriter generalizing about many things. For the past ten years I have done some talking each year and I have discovered that what I learn is not so much more about what is true but what people feel about what is true. There are some facts they are not willing to accept, others evident for years but which they are just beginning to accept, and some startling and disturbing facts which they seem to have accepted without any struggle at all. If we at the typewriters (or word-processors!) could sort these out we would know a lot more about what needs further discussion and what does not.

I am asked to talk about many things — books, political life, the world of Washington, ecumenism, the laity in the churches, and, of course, women in the church and society. The one subject which I find still upsets people and the area in which they have the most resistance to the facts is that of women and

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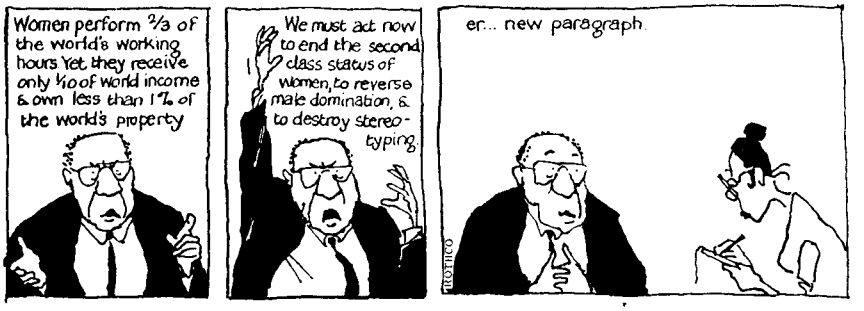
work. It is, I think more than a decade since I wrote my first column for *Commonweal* about it and spoke first about it to a university audience (Notre Dame). My thesis was always the same — that, except for the privileged of the upper and middle classes, women have *always* worked outside the home in the western world and, therefore, the question of the remuneration they receive, and the conditions under which they work, are questions of justice.

"I could feel you losing them the minute you began talking about most women not being able to be 'queen of the home'!", wrote the dean of a newly co-educational Jesuit university. At another, a student was disturbed that a woman apparently his mother's age could be concerned about inequity in the workplace and wrote a thesis about me. Somehow I have never been able to make the facts palatable, although I am sure that other lecturers have. It goes without saying that, as a result of the women's movement, there is growing acceptance of the principle of equality. But women as well as men still resist the fact that most women have had to work outside the home in the past and will have to do so in the future. (Economists predict now that the average American woman will spend thirty years of her life in the workplace.) Most of us would like to feel that it is a matter of choice rather than necessity — something I myself understand as a mother who spent more than twenty years "in the home." But, alas, that is not the case.

This summer women who hold office, women business owners, women in the corporations, women board chairmen and presidents of the colleges, union women, and women of the various women's organizations are joining together to sponsor a conference on *women, the economy, and public policy*. It is hoped that it will be an educational conference gathering together and making visible the facts on women and work, and to give the subject truly coordinated study.

The call to the conference began by citing the familiar phrase — "If women would only stay home —" and went on to make the point that if this often-expressed wish were suddenly fulfilled,


Women perform ⅔ of the world's working hours Yet they receive only 1/10 of world income & own less than 1% of the world's property
We must act now to end the second class status of women, to reverse male domination, & to destroy stereo-typing
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the economy would suddenly grind to a halt. Women are now so much a part of the economy as producers, consumers, investors, conservers, and workers that most of the institutions and enterprises we consider necessary to the nation's welfare could not go on without them. Education and health care are only two of these. Our failure to adapt government and business policy to the facts of women working and the different seasons of a woman's life cycle put American women at great disadvantage. It is hoped that documenting as dramatically as possible the essential contribution of women to the economy will stimulate changes in policy.

Why do American women who work earn on the average only *fifty-nine* cents to the dollar men earn when, according to a study by Sylvia Ann Hewlett, German women earn 72 percent, French women 86 percent? Even Mexico, Brazil, and Japan can boast better ratios than we can. The difference lies in *policy*.

Where policy has been adapted to the facts, change has been quick and significant. Not so long ago the consultant firm, Korn-Ferry, was able to publish the results of a study on women in management and how they differed from men. Five years earlier — *only* five years — they could not have made the study because the number of women in management would not have provided a significant number to study. The change was clearly the result of altered employment, selection, training, and promotion policies. The number of women owners of small businesses has jumped by leaps and bounds — chiefly the result of altered credit policies. (Incidentally, since the recent drop in unemployment is attributed in large part to the jobs generated by small business, the connection to the general health of the economy is clear.) The percentage of women now in professional schools as a result of equal opportunity admissions policies is almost astonishing — up to 40 percent of those *qualifying* for some of the best law schools, for example, and in the case of one veterinary school (the toughest of all professional schools to get into are the veterinary schools of the nation!) — 52 percent.

Family women, whether they are working outside the home or not, suffer most from our lack of a policy which recognizes the facts of their lives and needs. They are viewed as dependents rather than as producers. Their work in the home or in the volunteer sector is not considered part of the gross national product, although the nation might well founder without either. Their children are considered national assets worthy of free public education once they reach school age but they are left alone with the responsibility for their care before that. Sixty-seven of the other industrialized countries provide a family or child allowance in terms of monthly cash benefits; here the recent economic report shows more and more one-breadwinner families falling below the poverty line. (The dire position of the woman who is single head of household is well known. Her children represent more than half of all poor children.) Family women suffer from inequitable pension policies, sick and maternity leave policies, and tax policies.

The result of our failure to accept the facts on women and work is that we deprive ourselves of a sound national economy in which the creative and practical potential of each human being is utilized and one which integrates the human resources of the nation; so that neither man nor woman, child nor adult, suffers deprivation because of a cultural blindness on our part.

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

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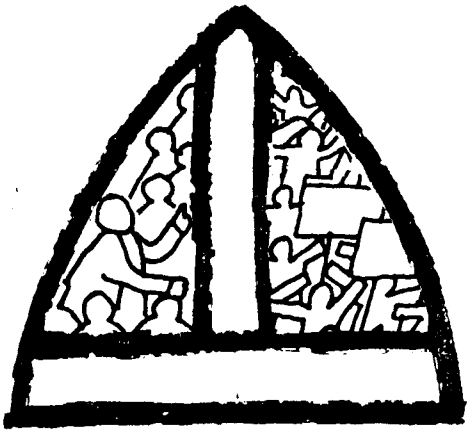
HOW SOUND IS THEIR ANTI-ABORTION STRATEGY?



The bishops & the politics of abortion

MARY MEEHAN

THE POPULAR NOTION of Catholic bishops as clever politicians is taking something of a beating these days. The image of a crafty Cardinal Richelieu or Bishop Talleyrand dies hard, but the U.S. bishops may finally kill it. To be sure, the jury is still out on the bishops' effectiveness on the nuclear arms issue. But on the bread-and-butter issue of tuition tax credits for parents who send their children to parochial schools, the bishops have been working away—and losing—for many years. And then there is abortion.

Viewing the wreckage on the abortion issue, one veteran of the Catholic bureaucracy said, "Would that we *had* a Richelieu at this point. Or a Talleyrand." Or even, one might add, a Francis Spellman or Richard Cushing. The late cardinals of New York and Boston had their critics, but no one ever suggested that they were novices in politics.

And that is exactly what a lot of people are suggesting after observing how the bishops, in the last Congress, insisted on distancing themselves from successful right-to-life leaders like Rep. Henry Hyde (R.-Ill.) and Sen. Jesse Helms (R.-N.C.) and the "human life bill" and instead backed a constitutional amendment that had no chance. Having consequently wound up with nothing at all in the last Congress, the bishops compounded their error in this one. While Representative Hyde worried about keeping in place the restrictions on public funding of abortion, the bishops again charged over the constitutional-amendment cliff.

The bishops' defenders often suggest that outsiders simply do not understand the Catholic bureaucracy and how it works. Actually, three different Catholic bureaucracies deal with the abortion issue. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) has a Committee for Pro-life Activities, that does educational work on the issue. The Office for Pro-life Activities comes under this committee. The bishops' social-action arm, the United States Catholic Conference (USCC), employs a lobbying director and a general counsel who have great influence on what the bishops do about abortion; both are extremely cautious in their advice. A third group, the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment (NCHLA) lobbies for a constitutional amendment. Although this group has a lay board and staff, it is funded by the bishops and it reports to the member of the hierarchy appointed to head it. Legally, for tax purposes, it is separate from the other groups; in fact, it appears to be subordinate to them.

Outsiders, especially if helped along by a modicum of anti-Catholicism, may imagine this structure as quite formidable. The truth lies with those who suspect it of being hardly the most efficient or effective. This is especially so since James Robinson, lobbying director of the U.S. Catholic Conference, stands aloof from the pro-life movement. In a speech to Catholic lawyers a few years ago, Robinson referred to the movement as "the anti-abortion people" and "they" and suggested that the U.S. might some day find "an accommodation on the issue of abortion." For a parallel, one must imagine that in 1965 a key lieutenant of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., had referred to civil rights activists as "the anti-segregation people" and "they" and had speculated that the country might reach an "accommodation" on segregation.

If the issue had been left to Robinson, little or nothing would have happened. But the pro-life movement, contrary to the image often projected by the media and treasured by many on the pro-choice side, is not a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Catholic bishops. It is a large and very diverse group of people: Catholics, Jews, an increasingly active group of evangelical Protestants, a scattering of agnostics and atheists, conservatives, moderates, liberals, some feminists and peace folk. It includes brilliant philosophers and lawyers and—as in any movement—a few people who, if not certified as loonies, probably could be. But most movement people are sane, hard-working, and exceptionally committed. Referring to her work as a full-time volunteer for the cause, one woman recently said: "It's like living in a cemetery; there's nothing happy about it." But she keeps on.

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THE BLUNT TRUTH is that much of this heterogeneous movement's progress has been made in spite of the bishops' involvement, not because of it. A few examples:

• In 1975, at a meeting of pro-life lobbyists and congressional leaders, NCHLA lobbyist Mark Gallagher argued against offering anti-abortion riders to bills before Congress. He said that the fate of a constitutional amendment depended on "how a large group of Congressmen who are really in the middle on this issue—frankly don't feel that strongly about it, aren't beholden to their constituents on the issue—are going to come down on it." He said that a series of anti-abortion riders on bills would "annoy them, and we could really be eliminating final votes which could make the difference, which if we didn't annoy them we might get. . . ." It should be said in Gallagher's defense that this inept advice probably did not originate with him. Some observers believe that he has been an effective lobbyist when his marching orders have been rational.

• After the Hyde amendment (restricting federal funding of Medicaid abortions) was offered and proved successful, the bishops' groups got on board behind it. But in 1979-80, they lobbied against an amendment offered by then-Rep. Robert Bauman (R.-Md.) designed to strengthen the Hyde amendment by making it clear that state legislatures could also restrict Medicaid funding of abortion. They suggested that the Bauman amendment would complicate the pending federal court case on Hyde. The pro-life lawyers fighting the case and other pro-life lobbyists did not agree. The Bauman amendment was finally passed over the opposition of the Catholic groups; it did not complicate the Hyde case, which pro-life forces won. To this day the Catholic groups cannot admit they were wrong about the Bauman amendment.

• On several occasions, they refused to support anti-abortion amendments offered by movement stalwarts like former Rep. Robert Dornan (R.-Calif.). Asked about this in 1981, USCC lobbyist James Robinson said he did not recall one of the Dornan amendments, then complained that every time a representative offers an amendment, "they'd like everyone down here to drop what they're doing" and support it. Of several others, he said: "they obviously, most of them, weren't going anywhere. . . . They were what I call harassment-type amendments." Of course, they weren't going anywhere if the groups that should have been the first to support them refused to do so.

• After Senator Helms and Representative Hyde introduced the first "human life bill" early in 1981, NCHLA lobbied against it within the pro-life movement. The USCC general counsel, Wilfred Caron, aided this effort with a memo attacking the Helms bill on constitutional grounds. Leaked to the press, the Caron memo was cited by pro-abortion forces at every opportunity for the next sixteen months. Hyde, normally cheerful and conciliatory, was sufficiently upset to write Caron and suggest that he remove himself "from the company of those, such as the National Abortion Rights Action League, who also oppose the human life bill."

• With the help of allies like Sen. Hatch and Dr. John

Willke of the National Right to Life Committee, the "bishops' men" slowed momentum for the Helms bill and sidetracked it in favor of the Hatch amendment. This constitutional amendment proposed by Sen. Orrin Hatch (R.-Utah) would have given Congress and the states the power—but not the obligation—to restrict or prohibit abortion. Hatch supporters steadily claimed that their measure had a real chance to pass the Senate, but refused to be pinned down on names of senators who would support it. At times they suggested that it could pass because there would be many absentees. (The requirement is two-thirds of those present and voting, which means 67 when all 100 senators vote, but fewer when there are absentees.) This was wholly unrealistic, because most senators do vote on constitutional amendments. All 100 voted on the balanced-budget amendment in 1982; on each of the two amendments considered before that, 99 senators voted. One critic suggested that possibly the Hatch supporters planned to lock pro-choice senators in the men's room during the crucial vote.

• The Hatch amendment, which caused a deep split in the pro-life movement, went nowhere in the House. It was never within striking distance of the 67 votes needed in the Senate; by some estimates it was 15 or 20 votes short there. Hatch himself conceded that he did not have the votes when he withdrew his amendment in September, 1982, though he claimed that "a substantial majority" of senators would have voted for it. Hatch then shifted his support to an even weaker measure, a states' rights amendment proposed by Sen. Thomas Eagleton (D.-Mo.). Although the Catholic bishops did not formally endorse the Eagleton amendment, their staff lobbied hard for it. Yet congressional veterans' voting records and the announced positions of new members showed that the Eagleton proposal could not pass either House or Senate. It failed to gain even a majority of the Senate Judiciary Committee in April, 1983, and was finally reported to the floor "without recommendation." On June 28, the Eagleton amendment was defeated in the Senate, 50-49; it failed to get even a majority, let alone the necessary two-thirds.

• The main contribution of the Eagleton amendment may have been to pro-choice fund-raising efforts. Ronald Fitzsimmons, lobbyist for the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), told a reporter that a hearing on it was "a waste of time, since they don't have the votes," then added "that's all right; it helps our fund-raising." After the Judiciary

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Committee acted, NARAL executive director Nanette Falkenberg issued a statement that said: "We know the legislation will be defeated by the full Senate." But then Falkenberg sent her members a fund-raising appeal in which she professed to be worried about the Eagleton measure. She hinted at her real assessment, however, when she told them: "It may be the last battle we have to fight in Congress for a long time if we win this one."

• The basic arithmetic in the Senate is: 67 votes required for a constitutional amendment; 51 for a bill; and 60 to break a filibuster (invoke cloture) against either. When Helms finally obtained a vote on a modified version of his human life bill in September, 1982, he proved that he was close to a majority. (With several absentees, the measure was tabled by a 47-46 vote.) Fifty votes were the most he obtained on any single cloture vote, although a total of 52 senators voted for cloture at one time or another. Several senators who normally vote pro-life failed to do so on crucial votes. All-out support from the White House and the bishops might have made the difference. President Reagan's support, although late and not very effective, was at least public. The bishops never publicly supported the Helms measure or even an end to the filibuster, although some of them privately lobbied for cloture. It was too little, too late, and quite possibly an effort to provide cover against charges that they had let the movement down again.

• Representative Hyde and Sen. Roger Jepsen (R.-Iowa) introduced, early in 1983, a "respect human life bill" similar to the Helms measure that was narrowly tabled by the Senate in 1982. The bill would expand and make permanent restrictions on public funding of abortion, encourage the Supreme Court to reconsider its abortion decisions, and deny federal funds to hospitals that fail to treat handicapped infants. President Reagan endorsed the bill on several occasions; he said that it had "the full support of this administration." Most of the major pro-life groups—including Ad Hoc Committee in Defense of Life, American Life Lobby, Christian Action Council, Life Amendment Political Action Committee, National Pro-life Political Action Committee, and National Right to Life Committee—supported the Hyde-Jepsen bill. But the bishops' groups, which went all-out for a constitutional amendment that could not pass, did nothing for Hyde-Jepsen. When Senator Jepsen tried to place his measure as a rider on a civil rights bill

'SEAMLESS GARMENT'?

BERNARDIN'S FRESH START

JOSEPH CARDINAL BERNARDIN of Chicago, newly appointed to head the bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities, is in an excellent position to make a fresh start. Politically skilled and a born diplomat, Bernardin has clout with his brother bishops and with the media. If he uses his diplomatic skills to mend fences with congressional conservatives and his persuasive powers with the liberals, he can do much to save the many lives at stake.

But conservatives in the pro-life movement are flatly opposed to Cardinal Bernardin's effort to link the issues of abortion, nuclear war, and the death penalty in a "seamless garment" approach to questions of life and death. The conservatives insist that the issues are philosophically separate, and they suspect that the cardinal's effort to link them is a ploy to deemphasize the abortion issue.

My view of this controversy is undoubtedly affected by years of experience in the peace, pro-life, and anti-death-penalty movements. In short, I think that the conservatives are largely wrong on the philosophical issue.

It is true, as Cardinal Bernardin said in a major address at Fordham University last December, that the issues "are all distinct problems, enormously complicated, and deserving individual treatment." Yet it is also true, as he said at Fordham, that traditional Catholic teaching holds that "there should always be a *presumption* against taking human life."

There is good reason for many pro-life groups to limit themselves to the issues of abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia. But the Catholic bishops cannot so limit themselves. They are bound to preach the whole Gospel and to deal with all issues of life and death. Perhaps their 1983 pastoral on war and peace was an effort to make up for years of neglect. That pastoral, I believe, should have been issued soon after Hiroshima. The bishops of the 1940s should have raised the moral issues about nuclear weapons before so many Catholics — especially conservative Catholics — became politically, emotionally, and economically committed to nukes.

The connections among the life issues are not only philosophical and religious; they are also psychological. The excuses for every type of violence are remarkably similar. The unborn, say the pro-abortionists, are "not really human." Convicted murderers, say death-penalty advocates, "are subhuman; they're beasts." Hard cases are used to justify abortion and to justify nuclear weapons. Supporters of either tend to overstate hard cases and to underestimate casualties. They use euphemisms like "pregnancy termination" and "nuclear device." The list goes on and on.

But the conservatives are right to be worried about the practical implications of Cardinal Bernardin's position. The "seamless garment" approach *could* become a way of deemphasizing the abortion issue and giving protective cover to liberal politicians who proclaim their compassion, yet vote to fund abortion and oppose efforts to save handicapped infants.

The Catholic bishops can avoid this by taking two steps: (1) as suggested in the accompanying article, working with conservatives on the abortion issue; and (2) preaching consistency to the liberals as vigorously as they do to the conservatives.

MARY MEEHAN

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last November, his effort was tabled by 42-34. Some observers believe that Jepsen chose the wrong vehicle for his proposal. They may be right. Certainly, however, his vote would have been far higher had the bishops supported him.

INCOMPETENCE is the obvious explanation for this stunning record of failure. Incompetence is what inspires the bitter remark circulating in pro-life ranks: "The bishops are getting into the peace movement—better go for your bomb shelter."

Incompetence is not, however, the only theory that might explain what the bishops are doing on the abortion issue. Another explanation, suggested by many of their critics, is that they *are* behaving like a Richelieu; that while appearing to advance the pro-life cause, they are trying to destroy the political part of it. The critics think that key bishops and/or staff of the U.S. Catholic Conference feel that the abortion issue is a nuisance that results in bad publicity for the church and distraction from other policy matters. They also know that it is devastating for liberal Democrats with whom they agree on most other issues.

The critics, who point to a long list of other blunders by the hierarchy on abortion, believe that the bishops supported the Hatch amendment with the expectation that it would be soundly defeated and that the media would call that the last hurrah for the pro-life movement. As Rev. James Schall, S.J., of Georgetown University wrote in 1982: "If the Hatch amendment is defeated, the weakest possible case, then it will be easy to say that nothing is 'possible,' so we must accept defeat and 'get on' to other things. Having tried and lost, the issue can be quietly dropped. . . ."

The bishops say that they are pursuing a constitutional amendment in good faith and that they will stay the course as long as it takes. Father Edward Bryce remarks that he is the second director of the Office for Pro-life Activities and that there will "be a third and a fourth and a fifth." He says that there are "no grounds on which to say, 'Oh, they're going to drop this. . . .' The strategy is: Get to the goal, and do all the steps necessary to get to the goal. And perseverance is necessary."

But more than the record of the bishops and their staff make many suspect a sell-out. Suspicions grow when pro-lifers see some bishops go out of their way to associate with pro-abortion Catholic politicians. The new governor of Wisconsin, Anthony Earl, is a Catholic who claims to be personally opposed to abortion but nevertheless supports public funding of it. The auxiliary bishop of Madison, the Most Rev. George Wirz, celebrated a special pre-inaugural Mass for Earl in the Madison cathedral last January. He should have said a requiem Mass for children killed by abortion instead. As pro-life activist Rev. Charles Fiore remarked at the time, "The church has got to make up its mind—toady to the politicians or preach the gospels."

If some key bishops or USCC staff are trying to kill the abortion issue—and I am not absolutely convinced of this, although it is hard to understand the record otherwise—their excuse may be that the bishops can be more effective on the abortion issue if they approach it as pastors and educators rather than as politicians. Many of their strongest critics agree fervently with this thought, but they keep wondering: if the bishops want to quit the politics of abortion, *why don't they just quit*? Why behave like Samson, pulling the entire structure down on everyone's heads?

Possibly there is no grand conspiracy, but just the ordinary, everyday sins of pride and inability to admit error. Perhaps the bishops are like Lyndon Johnson during the Vietnam War; they are "waist-deep in the Big Muddy" and would rather go neck-deep than admit they are wrong. And there is certainly a strong institutional arrogance in their bureaucracy. The Catholic church, after all, has been around for nearly 2,000 years; it has outlasted political parties, governments, even empires. People who serve it often pick up, perhaps unconsciously, a sense of invincibility and an assumption that it is their prerogative to run things. They also tend to take the long view, sometimes without bothering to explain. The Hatch amendment strategy may be a ten- or fifteen-year plan, with the bishops' expecting to lose the first few rounds but win the last one. That is unrealistic, for in politics it is hard to build victory on a series of defeats; but explaining it as a long-range strategy would at least assure people that there is method in the seeming madness.

THE BISHOPS' STAFF seem to have an obsession with the constitutional amendment route. Most pro-lifers see a constitutional amendment as their ultimate goal, but many were able to shift gears when the 1980 elections gave them a president and majorities in both houses of Congress. They reasoned that, having power, they should *use* it on behalf of the unborn.

The most effective pro-life lobbyists have followed a populist strategy and used guerrilla tactics. Knowing that they cannot let their opposition write the ground rules, they have repeatedly made lightning strikes with appropriations riders and have been creative in drafting other legislation. The original human-life bill, which would have defined the unborn as "persons" for purposes of the Fourteenth Amendment, was based on a series of civil rights cases. (Many liberals who attacked the bill as unconstitutional "forgot" that they favored an expansive view of congressional power under the Fourteenth Amendment on other occasions.) The "pro-life underground" in the Reagan administration has shown a striking ability to use regulatory powers on behalf of the unborn and of handicapped infants.

Senator Helms's occasional efforts to restrict federal court jurisdiction on abortion and school prayer—proposals that frighten timid souls at the USCC—are squarely based on Article III of the Constitution. Congress has seldom used its powers to restrict jurisdiction, but it is a good tool for restraining the judicial activism that gave us *Roe v. Wade* and other judicial disasters.

But the bishops show no interest in dealing with Senator Helms, and no gratitude for his highly effective leadership against abortion. The issue hurts Helms with many constituents in North Carolina, which is one of only ten states

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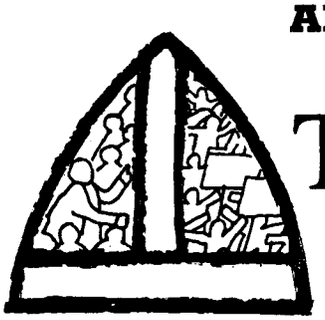
where legislatures voluntarily fund abortion. Speaking of his 1984 reelection campaign, which is expected to be very difficult, he has said, "If I have to come on home on the principle of the rights of the unborn, then I'll come on home." His thanks for this kind of courage have been frequent sniping and—in the last two years—outright opposition from the bishops' men. Rep. Henry Hyde, the skilled pro-life leader in the House, has also received shabby treatment from them.

It is unclear why the bishops fear association with conservatives like Helms and Hyde on the abortion question. This is precisely what they need to offset their appearance of behaving like liberal Democrats on nearly every other issue. The Catholic church is not supposed to be a branch of the Democratic party.

There are two ways the bishops could make up for their deplorable record on abortion legislation. They could shut down the NCHLA and tell their other committees to keep away from legislation, thus leaving the issue in the hands of people who have genuine competence in politics. The bishops could then direct their pro-life efforts to preaching and teaching, counseling and absolving. These are their special areas of competence—and ones that clearly need more attention, if one may judge by the many Catholics who have abortions and promote the practice.

Alternatively, if they want to keep an oar in politics, the bishops could sit down with congressional leaders who have proven so effective on the issue and ask, "How can we help?" That simple phrase would do more to repair the damage that has been done, to make a fresh start, than anything else they could say.

ANTI-ABORTION STRATEGY, A FIRST RESPONSE



The church & abortion, perception & reality

PHYLLIS ZAGANO

MARY MEEHAN is of course right. The bishops are political blunderers, and the failures of the Hyde, Hatch, and Eagleton amendments are but small example of their inefficiency and ineptness in the halls of Congress. A deeper question which Meehan does not ask is the more serious one. If these or any other amendments were passed, what difference would it make?

As we know all too well, the American body politic is not fazed by legislation and it will continue to do that which it pleases. *That*, we can hope, is the rationale behind any argument by an otherwise believing Catholic for continuance of Medicaid funding for abortions. A return to the days pre-*Roe v. Wade* would be a return to the clinics in sunny offshore islands for the rich and a return to coat hangers and hemorrhage for the poor. Whether they win or lose the legislative battle, the bishops will still have done nothing to counter this argument.

The infighting described by Meehan is real and it is devastating, not only to the possibility of abortion legislation, but to the general perception of the efficacy of the American Catholic bishops in matters of what most would agree to be serious moral questions. At a Washington conference last April, National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) spokesman Russell Shaw said that the previous two-and-one-half years in the abortion issue created for him a situation where motives had to be questioned. "This exercise has in many respects the characteristics of a self-fulfilling prophecy, by which I mean simply that the more often it is said that the bishops' conference has divided the pro-life movement, the more divided the pro-life movement becomes. . . . It is really time for all the components of the pro-life movement to desist from this vitriolic infighting and to establish some kind of détente if not entente and refocus their attention on the pro-life cause itself."

While this is in many respects the advice Meehan gives, it ignores, as does she, the manifest confusion about the role of bishop. This confusion may be extant among individual bishops and within the NCCB as a whole; but whether or not individual bishops and the NCCB are themselves confused, the laity clearly are. Recent lurches by individual bishops into various public arenas and political questions have created tremendous confusion in perceptions. The recent pastoral letter on war and peace is but one example. While it was covered, and covered widely, by the American press in November 1982 and in May 1983, there is little being said in public media about it at all today. This is of course to be expected, for it is no longer news. Yet it is being taught in an atmosphere of general confusion, against a backdrop of individual bishops issuing personal pastoral statements whenever the spirit — unfortunately often not the Holy Spirit — moves them.

Through it all trods the weary and confused faithful, unable to distinguish among doctrine, moral principles, and "prudential judgments." At one church gathering they are told it is all right to disagree with the bishops, because this or that section of the pastoral is a "prudential judgment." At another church gathering, the word of the bishops is law, and someone insists

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Going on 60

From Commonweal forty years ago: "Again and again we have protested against the change in our bombing policy. When the war started, the bombing of open cities, the massacre of civilians was a German crime. When we started bombing the continent our 'precision' bombing was our great pride. It still is, but it has become the precision bombing of entire inhabited areas. . . . It is no longer the factories we are bombing; it is the areas in which the factory workers must live that we bomb. It is the cities and the towns. It is the women and the children, the old and the young whom we burn alive, suffocate, bury and destroy. By the hundreds and thousands.

"This policy, which Mr. Churchill announces will not be abandoned . . . is in our opinion murder and suicide. It is the murder of innocent people and the suicide of our civilization."

—The Editors, "Area Bombing"
March 17, 1944

that according to this word Catholics are sinning by earning money from the defense industry.

No wonder the bishops are losing the abortion issue! People are beginning to argue that nearly anything the church states, whether it states it definitively or not, is a matter of individual conscience.

Clearly, on political questions the bishops have always had to watch their steps as well as their 501 (c) (3) exemptions. By contrast, abortion, it would seem, is just the sort of question where they would *not* have to. There is absolutely nothing in Catholic doctrine, principle, or judgment which would in the remotest way support direct abortion. Catholic philosophy cannot support any view which would tend in the direction of legitimizing abortion for any of the myriad of reasons given these days — from rape through incest to inconvenience and psychological disability, not to mention the panoply of medical debilities in the fetus which would create a "substandard" child. Nonetheless, the bishops are having trouble getting support — widespread support — for what has come to be known as "their" view, as well as the view of a few portrayed too often in the media as the lunatic fringe of the rosary cult. Most Catholics know more than they really need to about nuclear weapons, El Salvador, and the annual bishops' appeal, yet could not convincingly either explain or defend their own church's understanding of abortion.

What is perhaps most unsettling, and is really at the root of the failure of the various amendments, is the notion of what has come to be known as "primacy of conscience" in these matters. The argument must flow from the belief that abortion is a matter of *personal* choice, that is, the rights of another human are not being violated by means of abortion. Then the crime becomes not a direct one against an individual but an indirect one against society and its mores, or against the specific regulations of a church, which for much of the population are now in opposition to the mores of society. There follows closely the belief that if something is legal it is therefore moral. Such an understanding of abortion is spreading, and the bishops are doing next to nothing to stop it.

There is a kind of halo effect around appeals to both conscience and legality that blurs the question of whether state, church, or morality should ever demand that conscience be answerable to some clear standard. In discussing the Mansour case, for example, it was almost inevitable that Network, a Catholic lobbying group, should invoke "the long-standing Catholic principle of primacy of conscious," should complain that a demand made by the church on a Catholic holding public office was "inconsistent with and inappropriate to the way in which public policy is made in a pluralistic society," and should support "the individual's right to act on the dictates of conscience in pursuit of the public good." One might well argue that Agnes Mansour, despite the complicating factor of perpetual religious vows, was subject to a seeming double standard. There are numerous American politicians presumed to be Catholic whose stance on abortion is basically the same as Mansour's, and no one has called them to task in quite the same way. But some of these politicians, too, speak often and loudly regarding the "rights of women to privacy in their reproductive choices" — as though that were the only issue and ignoring what one activist bishop often says, that the

A QUESTION OF HONOR

PENALIZING BIRTH

ARLENE PFEIFER was three times class president, ranks in the top ten percent of her class, chaired her school's student government last year, and got expelled from the National Honor Society last month for lack of good character.

Her crime? She bore a child out of wedlock.

The story is grist for the abortionist's mills, a perfect example of how the pettily self-righteous have taken a moral wrong and made it a political necessity.

Asked whether premarital sex or taking a human life is the greater moral issue, members of the faculty council at Pfeifer's Pennsylvania high school would undoubtedly say taking a human life.

But confronted with both issues in one person — a girl who chose not to kill her fetus and so branded herself with a scarlet A — the panel said premarital sex and stripped Pfeifer of an honor it had previously awarded.

Like more than a million of her peers each year, Pfeifer could have chosen abortion. Nationwide, among teens, roughly forty percent pick abortion as the remedy of choice for a pregnancy. Pfeifer, however, determined that the life within her deserved to survive, and accepted the

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choice has already been made once conception takes place.

The real point is that clarifying the notion of primacy of conscience must be given high priority in any serious consideration of abortion. If American Catholics, struggling as they are beneath the weight of their bishops' various and varying political agendas, perceive abortion as a matter of private choice, there is no hope for passage of any legislation to limit or eliminate abortion because the people who most ought to argue for that legislation have not been educated.

ONE SOURCE of this confusion and ignorance, purposeful or not, is clearly the conflation in the press (and in the minds of Catholics) of the questions of birth control and abortion. In teaching *Humanae Vitae*, the American bishops made the quite serious educational mistake of not separating, and separating clearly, abortifacient methods of birth control from other methods. Their philosophical laziness has now returned to haunt them, and there is still no real education as to the distinctions. Birth control and abortion *are* separate arguments, yet some methods of birth control are really early abortions. This is not taught, because it seems to give legitimacy to the other, nonabortifacient methods of birth control. It could be that the trainers are not trained.

And so the American Catholic public goes blithely about its way, using all forms of birth control, not knowing that some methods are abortifacient. And the public press conflates the argument as well, from another direction, calling abortion just another form of birth control: speaking of unwanted pregnancies in an article about choosing a contraceptive, *New York Times* writer Jane E. Brodie said, "About half are terminated by abortion, a procedure decidely safer for the pregnant woman than childbirth," although she granted that this approach to birth prevention was "emotionally traumatic" and "more problematic" than other methods.

This attitude is becoming ingrained in the public mores, creating an independent problem for pro-lifers and bishops alike — the halls of Congress do, after all, loudly echo constituent beliefs. The campaign needed to pass one or another amendment is rooted in educating the population, especially the Catholic population, to the church's very human reponse to this very human problem. Yet in a society where personal comfort is uppermost, and nothing is worth endangering it, everything dictates the belief that the choice of abortion in this case or that case might very well be the "sensible" answer. No amount of passed or unpassed legislation will change that attitude, and without a change in attitude, the legislation will not pass.

COMING: Christopher Vecsey on American Indian spiritual politics

penalties of whispered comments and averted eyes as her widening form entered a room.

Far more graphically, and at a far greater personal cost than any of the statements borne for a day on placards by pro-life demonstrators, Pfeifer bore her pro-life statement for nine months and will live with it — her daughter, Jessica — for the next eighteen years or so.

In this, her high school principal John Mallino told the press, the teen demonstrated her lack of leadership "and character, and I emphasize character."

About the character of Jessica's father, we know only by inference. Whoever he may be, he, too, chose not to postpone sex until after marriage. But unlike the girl, his deed is invisible, rinsed away in the shower within hours of commission. Only in Pfeifer's child has his impulse taken root, and only in Pfeifer's life will it have an impact. If the father were a fellow student — which Pfeifer says he is not — he would not have to face honor society expulsion. His name could remain unknown.

For generations, parents have kept their daughters closely tethered on the grounds that unlike the boy next door, their daughter could get pregnant. Not even the advent of birth control liberated teenage girls from parental anxiety. No method was certain and the penalties for failure — childbirth and public censure — would fall only on the girl.

Legalized abortion gave teenaged girls an out, paralleling the irresponsibility allowed teen boys. With a safe, clean abortion clinic in the nearest mid-sized city, no one needed to know what had happened. As easily as the $200 cash for the operation could be raised, all evidence of a pregnancy could be erased even before it became publicly visible.

Women are taking the same fast exit. Facing the marketplace's conviction that pregnancy means professional unreliability — and their male employers' less-readily admitted belief that women who sleep around (unlike male *bons vivants*) deserve punishment — they, too, are aborting. Given the choice between killing an unknown infant and dropping a notch or two in their profession, the decision, for most, has been clear.

Whenever individual moral convictions fall outside the social order, decisions of conscience come at a price. For Martin Luther King and his followers, the price was beatings and jail terms; for anti-war and anti-nuclear activists they include fines and court fees. But when decisions like Arlene Pfeifer's — decisions to sustain life despite personal inconvenience — are made harder by a society that insists on exacting its pound of flesh from the less-than-perfect, then society has clearly taken a stand against life.

Until women pregnant out of wedlock are fully accepted, and are supported in their material needs, abortion will remain what it is today: a moral wrong widely viewed as politically essential to establishing parity between men and women in the world.

CARLENE B. HILL

(Carlene B. Hill works for a Massachusetts daily newspaper.)

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THE HUMAN FAMILY UNDERSTANDING OTHER PEOPLE

Children's and Young Adults' List

The following titles have been selected from among the many published from August 1982 through July 1983 to cover a wide range of ages, interests and readability. Those books have been listed which seem best to portray relationships among people of different origins, races and religions, and depict their varied backgrounds. The list is the result of agreement by a representative committee of the best in the field for children and young adults.

Alina: a Russian Girl Comes to Israel, *by Mira Meir; photographs by Yael Rozen, translated from the Hebrew by Zeva Shapiro, Jewish Publication Society, 1982, $7.95*
"This is Alina . . ." begins this photographic picture-book account of the experiences of a third-grade Jewish student whose family has emigrated to Israel from Russia. Treated as an outsider, shy, inquisitive, Alina is puzzled by the strange customs, food, and language of the people. She is put in a special class for immigrant children, visits a kibbutz near the Lebanese border (and has to stay in a shelter during a bombing raid), and learns that there are many other immigrants in Israel. Through the help of a new friend, Rutti, Alina gradually becomes acclimated and, in the end, is the one who helps Sonia, a new arrival from Russia. (8-10)

Annie on My Mind, *by Nancy Garden, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1982. $10.95*
Liza and Annie, high school seniors, meet and instantly develop a close and wonderful friendship. When this friendship turns into romantic love, they must face the problems and conflicts not only within themselves, but also with their families, friends and schoolmates. Their very special love is not an easy one. (12 and up)

Anwar Sadat, *by Raymond Carroll. Franklin Watts, 1982. $8.90*
Beginning his military career as a member of a revolutionary group trying to rid his beloved Egypt of British rule, Anwar Sadat rose to become a firm leader who fearlessly took bold steps toward peace in the Middle East. This is the straightforward, inspiring biography of a man who was guided by his belief that one "who cannot change the very fabric of his thought will never be able to change reality." (12-14)

As the Waltz Was Ending, *by Emma Macalik Butterworth. Four Winds, 1982. $9.95*
Born and educated in Vienna where she received training with the corps de ballet of the Vienna State Opera, the author recounts her childhood and bittersweet experiences of growing up in a war-torn country — both joyful (earning four curtain calls in an early performance) and sad (being raped as a teenager by a Russian soldier). A poignant, touching, readable autobiography, written without sentimentality, of a talented, spirited young woman. (14 and up)

The Bicycle Man, *by Allen Say. Parnassus/Houghton Mifflin, 1982. $9.95*
Through the soft illustrations, readers get a glimpse of life in a Japanese island village *circa* World War II, the time of the author's childhood. On sportsday, the children and parents prepare for a day of events. The races begin and the adults join in the fun. Strangers appear, two American soldiers, one with a face "as black as earth" and the other "a white man with bright hair like fire." The tall black soldier stages a magnificent, daring show riding a bicycle, to the delight of the children, and is awarded a prize — the largest box available. After thanking the school in their language, the smiling Americans leave arm-in-arm. The special day was a joyful experience for children who had never before seen Americans. (5-8)

Black Theater in America, *by James Haskins. Crowell, 1982. $9.50*
From the African Grove Theater in the 1820s to the Negro Ensemble Company today, this fascinating history traces the participation of blacks in American theater. Persisting in the face of racial discrimination, lack of education and demeaning stereotypes, black theater evolved into the creative force it is today, giving us such well-known artists as Paul Robeson, Ethel Waters and Ossie Davis. (12-14)

A Chair for My Mother, *by Vera B. Williams. Greenwillow, 1982. $9.50*
A simple story told by a child whose mother is a waitress in the Blue Tile Diner. The vivid illustrations in this picture book show the progress of the family as they try to fill a huge jar with coins for the purchase of a "wonderful, beautiful, fat, soft armchair" to replace one destroyed in a fire. Readers learn about the fire and about life in a city tenement as the girl's mother and grandmother save to buy a new, overstuffed chair. A good story for inner-city children who will relate to the events and to the warm relationships. (3-7)

Gandi, *by Gerald Gold. Newmarket Press, 1983. $16.95 ($9.95 paperback)*
Gandi's life and works are presented through the words and pictures of the man, his people and his country. Many still photographs from the Academy Award-winning motion picture are included. (12 and up)

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A Girl Called Bob & a Horse Called Yoki, *by Barbara Campbell. Dial, 1982. $9.95*
Bob, who enjoys her chats and visits with the local storekeeper's old delivery horse, is shocked to hear that the horse will be sold to a glue factory while his owner is ill. She and Chuckie are determined to save the horse and do so with the help of Bob's eccentric landlady. Children who love animals will empathize with Bob and her friends, but the other dimension to the story is a realistic but loving look at the economic facts of life for many poor Americans during World War II, and in particular for this black family with a working mother and a father in the Service. (11-14)

The Girl on the Outside, *by Mildred Pitts Walter. Lothrop, 1982. $9.50*
In 1957, nine black students integrated Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. This fictional recreation of that event brings us into the heads of two girls — Sophia, white, and about to have her senior year spoiled, and Eva, black and 15, fearful for her life and those of her family and fellow students. Vivid and thoughtful. (12-14)

Good Night, Mr. Tom, *by Michelle Magorian. Harper, 1982. $10.89*
Willie, an abused child of a single parent, is evacuated from London to a small English village during World War II. He stays with Mr. Tom, a man who has pretty much given up on the world. In that house, Willie and Mr. Tom find friendship. Willie learns to read and to develop his art talent. An absorbing story which holds some surprising and threatening twists. (14 and up)

Goodbye, My Island, *by Jean Rogers, Illustrations by Rie Munoz. Greenwillow, 1983. $9.50*
Twelve-year-old Esther Atoolik tells of her nomadic life on King Island near Nome, Alaska, where her family spends each winter. As the story begins, Esther is happy to be returning to the isolated island — she feels that King Islanders are looked down upon by other students in the Nome school. Eventually, the King Island school closes,marking the end of a way of life. Readers will learn the customs of the Eskimos, their day-to-day struggle for self-sufficiency, and some authentic language from this absorbing story. (9-12)

Hiroshima No Pika, *Words and Pictures by Toshi Maruki. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1982. $12.50*
The picture book format belies the stark realism of the horrors of the atomic bomb as it fell on Hiroshima, Japan, in 1945. The pictures are beautiful paintings with the dreadful message of destruction and suffering caused by war. It is one of the most moving anti-war books produced. (All ages)

The Jewish Americans: A History in Their Own Words 1650-1950, *edited by Milton Meltzer. Crowell, 1982. $10.50*
In this sensitive and illuminating collection, Jewish Americans speak for themselves through letters, diaries, speeches, memoirs and journals. From the humorous to the tragic, from peddler to Auschwitz survivor, from Haym Solomon to Alfred Kazin, they share their experiences and reveal their feelings about life in the United States. (12 and up)

Paula K. Lazrus Library of Intergroup Relations
Selected by . . .
Edith G. Selig, Supervisor
Joseph Benkovitz, Librarian, Springfield Gardens High School
Bertha Cheatham, Associate Editor, School Library Journal
Ruth Rausen, Coordinator of Young Adult Services, The New York Public Library
R. Bryan Roberts, Coordinator, Programs and Services Department, Queens Borough Public Library
Barbara Rollock, Coordinator of Children's Services, The New York Public Library
Roslyn Rubinstein, Head of Young Adult Division, Central Library, Queens Borough Public Library

Johnny Stands, *by Harry W. Paige. Warner, 1982. $8.95*
Fourteen-year-old Johnny and his elderly grandfather live in peace together on their Sioux Indian reservation. When a social worker comes to tell them that Johnny must move to the city and go to school, he and his grandfather run away. Johnny comes to realize that he must accept and live in the world outside of the reservation, but that he can also hold onto his Indian culture and heritage. (11-14)

Just Us Women, *by Jeannette Caines. Illustrated by Pat Cummings. Harper & Row, 1982. $9.50*
A delightful picture story of a young girl's trip to North Carolina with Aunt Martha, 'no boys and no men, just us women . . . '' Nothing much happens in this quiet adventure — the pictures and dialogue explain what will occur as they travel through states: they will stop at roadside stands to shop, walk through the rain, ''mosey down back roads,'' stop and take pictures, eat at fancy restaurants . . . '' and when we arrive we'll just tell them we had a lot of girl talk to do . . . '' A special trip for young readers. (5-8)

Langston, *by Ossie Davis. Delacorte, 1982. $9.95*
By a skillful weaving of Langston Hughes' poetry with the dialogue of his play, Davis achieves a great depth of feeling for the poet and what motivated Hughes to write. (2-14)

Let the Trumpet Sound, *by Stephen B. Oates. Harper & Row, 1982. $19.95*
A well-written, fully detailed biography of Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968), by the author of *With Malice Toward None*. For those who like history and biography, this period will be of great importance.For those curious about King, they will find him an intelligent, passionate, driven man who, through his church, was determined to make a major contribution to the Black Movement. His personal life was not perfect. He was hounded by the FBI, black leaders were jealous of him. Personal but objective handling. (14 and up)

Little Sister, *by Margaret Gaan. Dodd Mead, 1983. $13.95*
Caught up in he May Thirteenth Movement of 1925, Little Sister's family goes through many changes, but is held to-

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gether by a strong grandmother. As Little Sister tells of her experiences as a teenager coping with a generation gap, changing customs, and her family's involvement in political demonstrations, one becomes aware that teenagers of 1925 faced many of the problems confronting today's youth. (12-14)

The Minority Peoples of China, *by Margaret Rau. Illustrated with Photographs. Messner, 1982. $8.79*
Some of the fifty-six minority groups who live in China under the domination of the Han are described. There are Tibetans, Uygurs, Kazaks, Hui, Sodos, the Miao, and Dai, Ui, Yao and Zhuang. Although many live in so-called autonomous regions in the mountains or along the borders, their political life is similar to that of the rest of China, though often their day-to-day life and activities seem unchanged. Centuries of political upheavals keep their traditions and customs unique and seemingly intact. An interesting view of the peoples of China. (10-14)

Miss Rumphius. *Story and Pictures by Barbara Cooney. Viking, 1982. $12.95*
The story of Alice who became the "Lupine Lady" is told in colorful illustrations which trace her trips around the world. Her grandfather, whom she emulated, had been to many places and finally settled in a house by the sea, but told her to do a third thing: "Make the world more beautiful." A gentle story with beautiful pictures to complement the text. (7-9)

Particular Passions, *by Lynn Gilbert and Gaylen Moore. Crown. $19.95 ($9.95 paper)*
Thirty-nine accomplished women, some well known, most lesser known, in a wide variety of careers (politics, arts, science, literature) discuss their achievements, goals and struggles. These firsthand accounts will inspire as well as inform. (14 and up)

Rickey and Robinson, *by Harvey Frommer. Macmillan, 1982. $13.95*
Much more than a sports biography or a nostalgic trip back to Ebbets Field, this is the story of two great men. Branch Rickey, general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, was determined to break the color barrier in baseball and Jackie Robinson was the superior black player he needed to do it. Their triumph was to change baseball and our society forever. (14 and up)

Saturday's Children; Poems of Work. *Chosen by Helen Plotz. Greenwillow, 1982. $9.50*
The well-known anthologist has compiled a volume of poetry about work, starting from Biblical times to the present, as depicted by several contemporary poets. There are poems about children at work, work gangs, work of artisans and women's work: "Man may work from sun to sun/But woman's work is never done." (12-14)

Shabono, *by Florinda Donner. Delacorte, 1982. $14.95*
The saga of a young woman anthropologist who goes to the jungles between Venezuela and Brazil to study the curing practices of the tribes. After a year and a half, the author is forced to leave the area but not before she has become deeply involved with the people, about whom she writes with great respect, love and tenderness. (14 and up)

Some One Sweet Angel Chile, *by Sherley Anne Williams. Morrow, 1982. $11.50*
Poems by a black poet whose themes are the Blues, Blackness and Feminism. Strong, sad, sweet verses. (14 and up)

Team Work. *Photographs and text by George Ancoma. Crowell, 1983. $10.95*
"A picture essay about crews and teams." Ancoma's black-and-white action photographs depict occupations and sports events in which teamwork is a vital element: mountain climbing, drilling crews, nursing, filmmaking, car racing, the fashion industry, and sailing. Some photos show workers of all ages and of different races. (9-11)

This Strange New Feeling, *by Julius Lester. Dial, 1982. $10.95*
In these three deeply-moving tales based on real events, six people born into slavery taste freedom for the first time. They are the stories of three couples: Ras and Sally, Forrest and Maria, William and Ellen, how they lived as slaves and how they escaped, but above all how their love for each other and the love of those around them helped them survive. (11-14)

The Truth About the Ku Klux Klan, *by Milton Meltzer, Franklin/Watts, 1982. $8.90*
This dramatic study of the organization dedicated to white supremacy in America explores the origin and nature of the KKK. It examines why the Klan is reborn again and again and outlines what can be done to combat it in the 1980s as Hispanics and Asians have been added to its list of victims. (12 and up)

Two Truths in My Pocket, *by Lois Ruby. Viking, 1982. $9.95*
An excellent collection of six short stories which deal with the family relationships, friendships, hopes and fears of Jewish teenagers today. An interesting as well as illuminating anthology. (12-14)

War Without Friends, *by Evert Hartman. Translated by Patricia Crompton. Crown, 1982. $10.95*
A rather sobering story of World War II is told from the point of view of a Dutch teenager whose father is sympathetic to the Nazis and the Hitler regime. Although Arnold belongs to the youth organization of the Dutch National Socialist Party, he has nagging doubts about loyalty to his schoolmates, an outspoken but competent teacher, or his ambitious father. As his popularity at school wanes, or the hostility of his classmates becomes more overt, Arnold emerges with only one friend who believes as his father does. But he makes a final decision when this friend joins the army and the war escalates. (12 and up)

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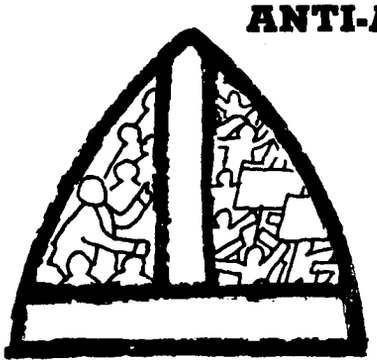

'Neither incompetent nor indifferent'

DAVID N. O'STEEN

FOR THE PAST nine years as the non-Catholic executive director of one of the nation's oldest and largest right-to-life organizations, I have cooperated with what Mary Meehan calls "the Catholic bureaucracy" in supporting pro-life legislation. I have encountered neither the incompetence nor the indifference to the pro-life cause that she claims exist.

1. It is true that the Catholic bishops are very cautious about endorsing specific pieces of legislation. I believe they see the teaching of moral principles as their primary function in the public debate. They do not get involved in legislative battles where the primary controversy is over procedural or constitutional technicalities rather than over a substantive issue of public policy. They avoid endorsing particular constitutional theories as though they were moral principles, and they do insist on a careful legal analysis before they support any legislation.

Without feeling the need to always take their approach, I respect their decision as it applies to them. "Lightning strikes" and "guerrilla tactics" may sometimes be necessary to force Congress to confront the abortion issue, but even a Protestant can find something ludicrous in the image of a "guerrilla bishop."

2. It is true that the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment (NCHLA) has worked primarily on a constitutional amendment to reverse the Supreme Court's abortion decisions. This is not because of an "obsession" with constitutional amendments — it is because that is the major purpose of the organization's existence, as its name indicates. Their concentration on grassroots organization at the congressional district level has been of enormous benefit, not only to the amendment drive, but also to the growth and development of the pro-life organizational base across the nation.

The NCHLA's single most important departure from this has been its central role in passing the "Hyde amendment" restricting federal funds for abortion every year since 1977.

According to Ms. Meehan, NCHLA's part in this campaign was late in coming and grudging when it came. NCHLA lobbyist Mark Gallagher did warn other pro-lifers in 1975 that Congressional polarization over funding might delay progress on a constitutional amendment and divert resources away from it. Mr. Gallagher's expression of caution was hardly "inept" or imprudent. It was certainly legitimate to ask the movement to consider any possible negative effect the anti-funding strategy might have. But once the pro-life movement decided to move ahead with this strategy, Mr. Gallagher quickly became a most knowledgeable and sophisticated lobbyist on this issue.

3. Ms. Meehan states that U.S. Catholic Conference lobbyist James Robinson once referred to "the anti-abortion people" as "they" and seemed to call for an "accommodation" on the abortion issue. Those words, taken out of context, are from an April 1979 speech to the National Meeting of Diocesan Attorneys. Mr. Robinson remarked that the pro-life movement was becoming more politically sophisticated, and that some groups were getting directly involved in political campaigns to elect pro-life candidates to public office. If he had used the pronoun "we" instead of "they" here, Mr. Robinson would have been saying that the USCC was violating the requirements of its tax-exempt status by seeking to elect candidates to office.

Mr. Robinson's speech included a very enlightening analysis of one reason why the Senate, in 1979, was so much more pro-abortion than the House of Representatives. He said that House members directly represent constituents' views, while senators tend to see themselves as representing the major institutions of their state. His point was that the elite institutions of our society (as represented by the Senate) are on a collision course with the will of the people (as represented by the House), and that the former would have to "accommodate" itself to the latter.

4. Finally, it is true that the USCC expressed misgivings about the "Bauman amendment," which was offered as a second-order amendment to the Hyde amendment to insure that states could set their own restrictions on abortion funding above and beyond the restrictions set by Congress. The Hyde amendment itself was then up for Supreme Court review, and the bishops' staff did not want it endangered by adding a further legal complication.

Here, as elsewhere, what Ms. Meehan sees as the USCC "opposing" or "lobbying against" pro-life legislation was really (a) pointing out legal or tactical problems to others in the

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pro-life movement, or (b) choosing not to pursue a particular strategy itself because of such problems. It is unwarranted to construe non-endorsement of a particular piece of legislation by USCC as evidence of "opposition." To see pro-life groups directly "lobbying against" pro-life legislation in Congress, one must look to others in the right-to-life movement for their celebrated campaign against the Hatch amendment.

Shortly after the Hatch amendment was introduced, the president of the American Life Lobby included in a mailing a statement, attributed to a "leader in the pro-life movement" which said, "As for those stubborn enough or stupid enough to tolerate the destructive cowardly anti-life Hatch amendment, they are simply committing sabotage against the movement, and no longer have a right to be considered pro-life." She described the statement as "absolutely true" and referred to the Hatch amendment as "totally pro-abortion." That is what I call "lobbying against" pro-life legislation, and since 49 senators ultimately voted for the Hatch amendment, it is an excellent example of "distancing" oneself from one's supporters in Congress. The Life Amendment Political Action Committee, LAPAC, advertised that it was "totally opposed" to the Hatch Amendment. In this and earlier articles Ms. Meehan writes positively about LAPAC and the American Life Lobby and apparently sees nothing incongruous in this.

WHICH BRINGS me to the central accusation against the Catholic bishops: their allegedly unprincipled support for the Hatch amendment and "opposition" to the Human Life Bill.

Both measures were conceived in the wake of pro-life gains in the 1980 senatorial elections. It was clear that two-thirds of the Senate would still not support a traditional Human Life Amendment, which would recognize the unborn child as a Fourteenth Amendment "person" and seek to forbid abortion except to save the mother's life. Yet a clear majority of the Senate, like a clear majority of the American public, as measured by Gallup and other polls, did claim to oppose the present policy of abortion on demand. The question arose: Could something be formulated as a "first step" toward full legal protection for human life which would be morally acceptable, politically feasible, and begin saving lives?

Some pro-life activists seized upon a brilliant article published in winter 1981 by Washington attorney Stephen Galebach, who proposed a "human life statute" to recognize the unborn child as a legal person by Congressional declaration. Mr. Galebach appealed to a number of Supreme Court decisions, most notably *Katzenbach v. Morgan,* in which the Supreme Court had deferred to Congress's fact-finding abilities to decide whether particular legal situations involved civil rights violations.

A "human life bill" (HLB) was introduced in Congress by Representative Henry Hyde and Senator Jesse Helms, in January of 1981. Contrary to its image in the media as legislation that would "make all abortions murder," the HLB would in fact have not forbidden a single abortion at any stage of pregnancy. The bill declared unborn children to be "persons" only for the purpose of protecting their "due process" rights under the Fourteenth Amendment, and did not invoke the "equal protection" clause, which might have addressed private action. The practical effect of the HLB, *if* upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, would have been to forbid active state support of most abortions and allow the states to set some abortion restrictions if they wished to do so. But even these restrictions would be subject to court review, and the courts could balance the "due process" rights of mother and unborn child in various situations.

The HLB ran into a problem with regard to both the Senate and the Supreme Court. In both bodies, some "conservatives" most likely to support the purpose of the bill were also "strict constructionists" who rejected the expansive theory of civil rights on which the bill's defenders relied. Legal scholar and former U.S. solicitor general Robert Bork, a well-known critic of the 1973 abortion decisions, told on William F. Buckley's *Firing Line* how he considered the HLB constitutionally defective. At the same time the Court still contained six of the seven Justices who had specifically ruled in 1973 that the unborn child was not a Fourteenth Amendment "person." They seemed unlikely to acquiesce to being overturned by a simple congressional majority and thereby implicitly diminishing their authority to interpret the Constitution. Thus a pro-life observer could be forgiven if he imagined that the HLB, even if passed by Congress, would be knocked down by the Supreme Court with some justices rejecting it as an attack on both their authority and the right to abortion, and others voting against its constitutional "activism." (The 6-to-3 vote in the recent *Akron* abortion case did little to contradict the impression that the HLB would have failed before the Court.)

Meanwhile, pro-life Senators with conservative constitutional views, such as Orrin Hatch of Utah, were also in a bind. Senator Hatch could not see himself advancing a theory of constitutional law that he rejected with regard to other issues as Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution; and he did not want to vote against any pro-life initiative, particularly one introduced by pro-life friends like Helms and Hyde. In the end, he voted in favor of the HLB in the Subcommittee on the Separation of Powers (and in favor of a later version on the floor), but also suggested that some kind of constitutional amendment mightbe drafted that would avoid the bill's possible constitutional problems.

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I recount this history for two reasons. First, although I also think the memorandum from the USCC's Office of General Counsel critiquing the HLB should not have been leaked to the press, since it could be misused by pro-abortion senators in the manner Ms. Meehan describes, it is clear that one did not have to look far to find similar concerns with the bill outside of the USCC. Second, I wish to point out that the effect of the bill under the best of circumstances would have been to permit, but not require, legislation restricting abortion — the very thing for which the Hatch amendment (and its supporters) have been so severely criticized by some pro-bill, anti-Hatch partisans.

IN THE MEANTIME other pro-life activists (none of them Catholic bishops) had come up with a plan known as the "two-amendment strategy" early in 1981. The idea behind this plan was simple: If the short-term goal was to grant legislative power to restrict or prohibit abortion, why not do so straightforwardly by means of a constitutional amendment? Such a measure would not be subject to court approval and would cut the issue clearly on the question of whether or not abortion should be restricted at all, rather than on a point of constitutional theory in addition to abortion. Actual legislation restricting abortion authorized by the amendment would require only majority support, not the two-thirds majorities that make it so difficult to enact a particular standard of protection into the Constitution, and these laws could prepare the nation for a more complete statement of principle, a full-fledged Human Life Amendment declaring all human beings' right to life under the Constitution. There was precedent for this in the way our nation dealt with slavery: It took the practical step of freeing the slaves first, and only later was the Fourteenth Amendment enacted as a statement of the former slaves' rights as legal "persons," followed by the Fifteenth granting the right to vote. I was an early supporter of such an approach.

When Senator Hatch introduced his amendment in September of 1981 it was obvious that it fit the criteria for the "first step" amendment, and the Catholic bishops made it clear that, after ratification of the Hatch amendment, they would keep urging legislators to give the maximum protection possible to unborn children until their rights were fully secured. A pro-life journalist covering the movement ought to have been aware of the Hatch amendment as part of a "long-term" strategy.

The support of the Catholic bishops' conference was necessary, though not sufficient, if such an amendment were to pick up momentum in Congress. Unfortunately, some supporters of the HLB were quick to interpret support for Hatch as though it were an attack on the HLB. Yet by the time the National Conference of Catholic Bishops testified in support of the Hatch amendment in November 1981, it had already been endorsed by many National Right to Life groups, including my own, which were then also supporting the Human Life Bill. The National Right to Life Committee endorsed the Hatch amendment that December (they had endorsed the HLB the preceding August) and of the four major national pro-life political action committees in the country, including our Committee for a Pro-Life Congress, three supported both the HLB and the Hatch amendment. Nevertheless, some supporters of the HLB launched a campaign against the amendment and the bishops, claiming that Hatch supporters in the pro-life movement were "selling out" pro-life principles.

Ironically, some of the most effective lobbying on behalf of the HLB was later done by people who also supported the Hatch amendment. Every National Right to Life group supporting Hatch also supported the HLB once it was endorsed by NRLC, including those which had earlier expressed concerns. When a modified version of the HLB finally came up for a vote on the Senate floor in the fall of 1982 my organization asked for, and received, the affirmative votes of both senators from Minnesota.

MS. MEEHAN seems to overlook a few facts in her effort to paint supporters of the Hatch amendment as spoilers undermining the HLB. In early 1982 the Hatch amendment passed the Senate subcommittee on the Constitution by a 4-to-0 vote, and passed the full Judiciary Committee by a vote of 10-to-7. This was quite an achievement, since no constitutional amendment on abortion had been approved even at subcommittee level for a decade. In March 1982 as the Hatch amendment was picking up momentum, Senator Helms introduced a new version of the HLB, the "Super Bill" (as some called it), which retained the section declaring unborn children to be due-process "persons," but added various provisions on federal funding of abortion and other matters. Senator Helms finally withdrew the "Super Bill" from consideration in August 1982, stating that it might have received only 35 votes in the Senate.

In September, as the Hatch amendment approached a long-awaited opportunity for Senate floor debate, Senator Helms put forward another proposal. The "personhood" provision had now been dropped. The new measure was now essentially an abortion funding bill with a preamble criticizing the Supreme Court's abortion decisions. Further complicating matters, this version of the HLB was actually introduced as an amendment to another amendment, a "court-stripping" measure on school prayer.

As Ms. Meehan notes, the bill was finally tabled by a vote of 47-to-46; after falling far short of the 60 votes necessary to invoke cloture.

By the time this bill was tabled, following a long and bitter filibuster, there was neither the time nor the receptive attitude necessary for debate on a constitutional amendment, and Senator Hatch therefore had to withdraw his amendment until the following year, at which time a modified version of the amendment received 49 votes. It was extremely unfortunate that the vote on the amendment had been delayed from its introduction in September 1981 until June 1983. The psychological advantage the pro-life movement enjoyed following the sweeping election victories of 1980 largely evaporated after the economy-dominated election of 1982, and the Senate felt no urgent need to rid itself of the abortion issue when the vote finally came.

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Ms. Meehan's insistence on blaming the Catholic bishops for a low vote count, when she and other pro-lifers were campaigning vociferously *against* said amendment, seems to overlook more immediately obvious targets for blame. For example, at least five senators who had either voted with the right-to-life movement on funding votes or who had previously indicated support for an amendment to reverse *Roe v. Wade,* and all of whom also had some pro-life group in their state actively lobbying against Hatch, not surprisingly voted against the amendment. How often could they please all of the pro-abortion side and part of the pro-life with one vote?

Given this internal opposition, and the fact that constitutional amendments (including 23 of the 26 which are now part of our Constitution) routinely fail on a first vote, the miracle is that 49 senators united on this repudiation of the abortion "right." But after almost eleven years Senator Hatch had succeeded in having the Senate to vote on the "right" to abortion itself for the first time, thereby giving pro-life political action committees a most significant scorecard.

SINCE THIS VOTE, the USCC and NCHLA have gone back to their usual work on pro-life legislation. Henry Hyde again led pro-life forces in Congress to a victory on abortion funding last October — with the usual effective help of the NCHLA. In November the pro-life movement took another step forward when Congress passed the Smith amendment restricting the use of public funds to pay for abortions through federal employee health insurance plans — again with the help of NCHLA. As Ms. Meehan notes, the Reagan administration has issued new regulations to protect handicapped infants — with the strong support of the USCC. NCHLA is aiding the drive to secure language guaranteeing the neutrality of the ERA on abortion. And one can reasonably expect that some more permanent form of abortion funding restriction, as well as other legislation, will claim the attention of the Bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities and NCHLA until another opportunity comes along for consideration of a feasible measure to overturn *Roe v. Wade.*

As for whether the bishops should dismantle their pro-life lobbying effort and whether NCHLA should be "shut down," I'm sure the National Abortion Rights Action League would be very pleased at the prospect of the nation's largest pro-life church quitting the effort and the highly successful pro-life organizational development and lobbying programs of NCHLA being abandoned. Under the leadership of its talented executive director, Ernest Ohlhoff, the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment has become one of the nation's most effective pro-life groups. The efforts of NCHLA, along with those of the National Right to Life Committee, are essential to the success of the nation's pro-life movement.

Dire predictions of the decline or demise of the pro-life movement after the defeat of the HLB and the Hatch amendment have proven as inaccurate as Ms. Meehan's claims of the bishops' "incompetence." But if her recommendations were actually followed, then those predictions would stand an excellent chance of becoming reality.

Screen

THE COMEDIANS

WOODY ALLEN, DUDLEY MOORE

THE FILM COMEDIAN is almost always a disguised aggressor, a *schlemiel* and victim who causes destruction in his wake through the clumsiness of apparent innocence. It is as if his acts are separated from his intention and are therefore fortuitous, almost magical — the manifestations of unadmitted wishes. Jerry Lewis is the prototype — he tends to create havoc by being oblivious — though all the great comedians from Chaplin and Keaton to Woody Allen share in this quality. Allen is a more complicated case because he is his own director and he tends to be more self-conscious as an artist. His performances offer us that double awareness that movie comics mostly give us inadvertently of being at once within and outside the character. He continually lets us know that performance is illusion, that he is really after all no one but himself.

Woody Allen's new bitter-sweet film, *Broadway Danny Rose,* is a comedy about mythmaking. At the start, a group of comedians sit around a table at the Carnegie Delicatessen trading anecdotes about the old days. Their gossip occasions an extended anecdote — a story, the film itself — about Danny Rose (Woody Allen), a borscht-belt comedian turned agent. Danny Rose, who calls himself a personal manager, handles (takes care of really) a comic collection of losers, including a blind xylophonist, a one-armed juggler, an old couple who fold balloons, a one-legged tap dancer and — his main attraction — an overweight vainglorious saloon singer named Lou Canova. This legendary Danny Rose is a zealous promoter of the improbable, a one-man Salvation Army for crippled performers. Although the character has a sense of irony, has Allen's sense of irony, the film has no discernible irony towards Danny Rose's self-effacing behavior. No distinction is made between masochism and benevolence. The more self-denying Danny Rose is, the more we're asked to admire his nobility. The personal manager's philosophy, which he attributes to one of his folk-wise uncles, is "Acceptance. Forgiveness. Love." It is the thesis of the movie, as naked a statement as Allen has offered us.

The main action concerns Danny Rose's attenuated attempt to deliver Lou Canova's girl friend, Tina (played in bravura fashion by Mia Farrow), to a showcase performance of the alcoholic singer at an out of town club performance Canova's wife is also attending. Danny Rose is the "beard," the pretend lover, the stand-in. The "beard" wins the heroine ultimately, though not before going through a series of testing ordeals. There are several myths at play including, to a certain extent, the ugly duckling who is really a swan. At some point, Danny

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Rose says to Tina, "No matter what anyone says, I know I'll never be a Cary Grant." A funny line coming from Woody Allen, but Rose's soul we're made to believe is as beautiful as Grant's exterior. The *schlemiel*, Danny Rose, is a great man in disguise.

Shot in unassuming black and white by the brilliant cinematographer, Gordon Willis, *Broadway Danny Rose* (like its protagonist) disguises its ambition in apparent modesty. Next to the innovative *Zelig, Broadway Danny Rose* seems a skillful entertainment, an interlude between serious projects. The film's seeming offhandedness is its disguise. Almost all of Allen's obsessions, emotional and artistic, make appearance. Danny Rose is the loser as saint who gets his reward, the heroine, here on earth. Allen is at once Danny Rose and himself, talking as the character and through him, expressing himself when the occasion demands with wit and eloquence unavailable to his semi-articulate persona. We are almost always aware that Danny Rose, that loveless *schlemiel*, is in disguise the famous Woody Allen, who has already won Mia Farrow in real life. Disguise, doubleness, and duplicity, is Allen's obsessive theme.

Broadway Danny Rose is a supple, intelligent, and self-regarding film, less adventurous perhaps than Allen's best work — *Annie Hall, Manhattan, Zelig* — though satisfying on its own terms. It is touching without being manipulative, more open to feeling than most of Allen's work. If Allen is not the best of our current filmmakers, and he has to be thought of as among the best, he is at the very least the most self-improved. From his first real film, the crude *Take the Money and Run* to *Broadway Danny Rose* lies a brief inspirational course in the history of cinema.

DUDLEY MOORE, like Woody Allen, is a satiric stage comic who has become a movie star. I thought Moore more appealing in supporting roles—particularly as the closet lecher in *Foul Play*. As a comedian, Moore is like an astonishing lifelike wound-up toy. He is funny, though never quite recognizably human. His work in Howard Zieff's sometimes charming remake of Preston Sturges's *Unfaithfully Yours* — the latest trend in Hollywood is to recycle old movies (something deconstructionist in the impulse) — is not deplorable, merely frantic and unconvincing. We are asked to believe that Moore (Rex Harrison played the role in the original) is a celebrated orchestra conductor with a beautiful young wife (Natasja Kinski). The Moore character is blissfully happy in this May-December marriage until he discovers, or thinks he discovers, that his wife is having an affair with a handsome younger man, a friend and protégé. Jealousy unhinges the elfin Moore, who seems unhinged in general, and he undertakes an elaborate revenge which we see enacted in fantasy (in the character's mind as he conducts) and for real (in the fantasy of the film) — the second a particularly funny scene. If Allen is almost always the same, Moore seems barely the same character for ten minutes at a stretch. He is a chameleon without a fixed nature, seems rarely to draw on, whatever that is, himself. Rage and jealousy are just occasions for new faces, new tics of cleverness. *Unfaithfully Yours* is often zany and entertaining, but it lacks presence and conviction. The film, like its star, seems to disappear before your eyes.

JONATHAN BAUMBACH

(COMMONWEAL's *movie reviews are currently being written by guest critics. Jonathan Baumbach has written on film for* Partisan Review, Harper's *and other journals.)*

Books: PRO-CHOICE PERSPECTIVES

THE RIGHT TO LIFERS

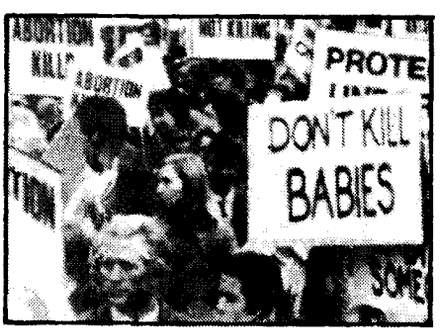
Connie Paige
Summit Books, $14.95, 275 pp.

ENEMIES OF CHOICE

Andrew Merton
Beacon Press, $13.50, 229 pp.

Dave Andrusko

G. K. CHESTERTON, in a typically astute observation, once wrote that it would take a book to set straight a paragraph of falsehoods, half-truths, facts, and innuendos. I confess this review would need to be on microdot to have space enough to correct the misinformation, distortion, flights of fancy, misdirection, and fallaceies to be found in *The*



Right to Lifers and *Enemies of Choice*.

As editor of *National Right to Life News*, I am well aware that, traditionally, neither side to the abortion battle asks for quarter, nor are any prisoners taken. Alas, the use of exaggeration and the substitution of vilification for evidence is all-too-often standard operating proce-

(Continued on page 187)

OUR RIGHT TO CHOOSE
TOWARD A NEW ETHIC OF ABORTION

Beverly Wildung Harrison
Beacon Press, $18.95, 334 pp.

Barbara Hilkert Andolsen

THIS BOOK is an extremely important attempt to create an ethic of abortion rooted in women's experience and using women's well-being as a central norm. Beverly Harrison wants early abortion to be legally unrestricted and readily available, thereby encouraging the trend toward abortions in the first trimester rather than later. She makes "viability" a significant point affecting the moral claims of fetal life. But she would not absolutely

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rule out some abortions up to the time of birth. All this may make pro-choice activists hail her book as a theological endorsement and pro-lifers dismiss it as the work of the enemy — and neither read it thoughtfully, or at all. That would be a shame.

For one thing, this is not just a book about abortion; it is first of all a book about procreative choice. Harrison insists that women's emancipation depends on their ability to control their own reproductive powers, a control women have struggled for throughout history. Contraception has put that control within reach, but only when backed by abortion in case of contraceptive failure. Harrison stresses women's right to "bodily integrity." She asserts that it is wrong for society to coerce a woman into using her body against her own will as a means to sustain the total physical existence of another. A woman is never the social equal of a man if she can be forced to endure an unwanted pregnancy which devastates her chosen "meaningful life plan." Likewise for Harrison procreative choice is a fundamental moral good. True procreative choice is a deliberative choice to bear a child with a clear realization of the responsibility involved and a full commitment to rear that child properly. Genuine procreative choice requires a society ready to accept corporate responsibility for the welfare of children; but it also requires the availability of safe, elective abortion.

The present widespread availability of abortion does in fact mean that childbearing can be an option, not an inevitability, for fertile, heterosexually active women. According to Harrison, this access to abortion undermines patriarchal religion's primary definition of women, i.e., childbearers. In a sharp critique of the Christian tradition, Harrison contends that the prohibition against abortion arises primarily in conjunction with hostility toward women and disapproval toward any non-procreative sexual activity. Prohibiting abortion is part of an attempt to control female sexual activity through celibacy, motherhood, or social disgrace. "Many of Christianity's most misogynist theologians considered it a murderous act if a married women was *in any way* sexually active apart from procreative intent or resistant to childbearing as her vocation." (Many early theologians believed that semen contained complete persons in miniature. Therefore, any act which resulted in the ejaculation of semen, while deliberately impeding its "nesting" in a woman's body, was murder.)

Harrison attacks John Noonan's influential thesis that Catholic teaching consistently grants full human value to fetal life. She shows what a careful reading of Noonan's own evidence confirms: there was an ongoing controversy among earlier theologians concerning the point at which termination of fetal life was homicide, and there was disagreement about reasons which might justify leniency toward abortion.

To balance the fragmentary comments of selected Church Fathers on which the history of Christian attitudes toward abortion is usually based, Harrison examines the "real historical perspective in which the contemporary discussion belongs" — the history of women's struggle to control their fertility and to cope with real material deprivation.

Harrison expresses the "hope that a non-misogynist Christianity is possible." Her own view is that a complete rethinking of Christian sexual ethics would be necessary in order for an egalitarian Christianity to emerge. Christian leaders would have to admit that the Bible provides diverse images of women and the family, and that many Biblical teachings are predicated on male supremacy and domination. Indeed, Christians would have to reexamine all their assumptions about women, procreation, and family, acknowledging how our cultural and religious understandings of these realities have varied throughout history.

Harrison's constructive theological position is heavily dependent upon the work of Carter Heyward (*The Redemption of God, a Theology of Mutual Relation*). Harrison rejects a notion of a transcendent, dominant God who directly creates each and every fetus as a "gift" to be passively accepted by subordinate women. Rather she stresses women's responsibility as co-creators with God to exercise human freedom in shaping the life-enhancing potential in creation through procreative choice.

Harrison wants to keep our focus on the well-being of women when social policies on abortion are debated. Therefore she waits until the seventh chapter to ask: when do we appropriately recognize the fetus as a full member of the human community entitled to protection against unjustified killing? Harrison acknowledges the difficulty in judging "when we are wisest to predicate the existence of a human being within a continuous process of life development," but she insists that this is something we must in fact judge, that it does not arise self-evidently from the biological facts without some explicit or implicit theory about those facts lurking in the background — and deserving scrutiny. She herself stresses the importance of the capacity for discrete biological existence — potential freedom from dependence upon the body of the pregnant woman. Therefore, she selects viability as the crucial point when respect should be shown for a being possessing the "foundation requirements of personhood." Selection of such a late point in fetal development is consistent with Harrison's commitment to give heavy weight to the rights of the woman facing an unwanted pregnancy. Harrison repeatedly emphasizes that the pregnant woman is indisputably a person, while the status of the fetus in the early stages of its development is questionable.

Ultimately Harrison insists personhood is constituted by a covenant of caring which establishes moral relationships among the members of society, not by mere biological human existence. Therefore, fetuses in the final stages of development and even infants are persons to the extent that we recognize our moral obligations to provide them with the social conditions which allow them to become persons. Harrison faults pro-life advocates for insisting on the personhood of fetuses without a sincere commitment to provide the conditions for their personal develoment.

The distinctive aspects of Harrison's argument should be apparent even from this summary. First, she challenges the premise of most moralists who have ad-

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dressed abortion, namely, "that the status of fetal life is *the* determining issue in the moral debate." Instead, she frames the question so that the well-being of women and their capacity to act as autonomous moral agents are given a central place. Second, by putting the abortion issue in the larger context of procreative choice, Harrison openly directs attention, not to the exceptional cases of rape or threat to the mother's life, but to the more normal category of abortion as a back-up for contraception. This candor on her part may discomfort both pro-choice and pro-life readers, but one must admit that she is honestly taking up the major question that really faces us. Third, by using a critical historical method in examining the Christian anti-abortion tradition, Harrison shatters a certain complacency that some Christian scholars have shown about the firmness of the ground on which they build their anti-abortion argument. Fourth, in making a case for such a late point in fetal development as the occasion for predicating "personhood," Harrison sets out a serious critique of the romantic "biologism" of many abortion opponents. And finally, no matter how much some readers may disagree with her position on the moral status of fetal life — I among them — Harrison must be credited for addressing the question of fetal life in such a direct and sophisticated fashion, far from the usual practice in the pro-choice literature.

Let me be clear that I cannot agree with Harrison's position on a number of points, some of them quite significant. Her chapter in search of an alternative "feminist perspective" on the history of abortion is ultimately unsatisfying because there are too few source materials to sustain a serious examination. (Women's history has not been preserved through the channels which record the history of privileged males.) And those unfamiliar with Carter Heyward's theologizing or not enamored of process philosophy and theology may find Harrison's feminist theology either difficult to understand or unpersuasive.

More important, throughout the book Harrison overemphasizes the moral significance of human freedom in determin-

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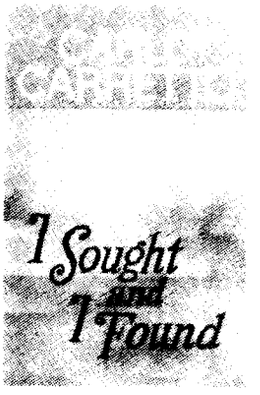

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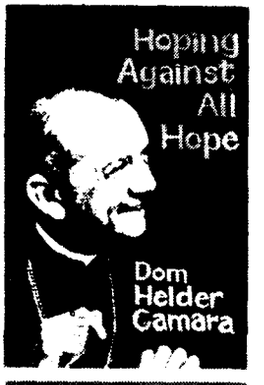

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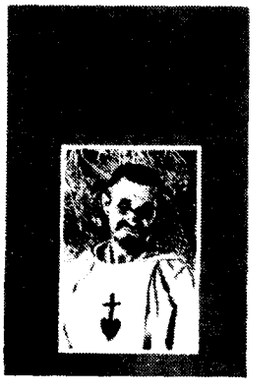

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ing life plans and procreative choices. Indeed the oft-repeated phrase "life plan" created echoes in my mind of something most befitting a briefcase-toting MBA pursuing a well-mapped career. Circumstances beyond our control often foil our "life plans" and even our most sophisticated efforts to control our fertility. Harrison is well aware of the finitude of human resources and human ingenuity which lies at the root of problem pregnancies. Yet it seems to me she gives no consideration to the possible positive moral significance in accepting situations we did not choose — in the "making do" and "keeping on" which women have maintained for generations. She does not explore the fortitude and generosity which would allow a woman to undertake a pregnancy that imperiled her "life plan." Are such experiences really only the result of a socially induced, moral passivity which women must now wholly reject? (Well-taken, however, is Harrison's caveat that it is unfair to hold women to an ethic of self-sacrifice, while men are permitted a minimalist ethic of self-interest.)

Finally, the matter of fetal life. Harrison is a woman of moral integrity — sensitive to the claims of the socially disadvantaged. Nevertheless, her theory that human rights are a product of our moral commitment to one another, not rooted in any independent moral reality, such as God or the natural law, disturbs me. The history of the human race is full of instances in which the powerful refused to acknowledge the moral worth of the powerless. I am not content to ground the rights of the vulnerable in a social contract.

A book review is not the place where one could explore such differences at the length that the level of Harrison's own argumentation would require. I can only signal my disagreements, while emphasizing that *Our Right to Choose* is a major, and even brilliant, contribution to the abortion debate.

Generous spirit, idiosyncratic book

PEOPLE OF THE LIE

THE HOPE FOR HEALING HUMAN EVIL

M. Scott Peck

Simon and Schuster, $14.95, 269 pp.

Leo J. O'Donovan

SCOTT PECK is the kind of author a reader naturally wants to meet. Indeed, after reading several of his chapters, you already feel you know him. His style is disarmingly straightforward; he introduces case material with novelistic vividness; his use of personal example is adroit, unselfconscious, revealingly apt. Here is an established psychotherapist who expresses his humanistic and religious concern without any academicism or professionalism whatsoever.

In *The Road Less Traveled*, a widely read and helpful book published in 1978, Peck tried to show how religion and psychology interwine on the journey of spiritual growth. Graciously and modestly, but with equal vigor, he there surveyed the resources and requirements for lives of true spiritual attainment. Now, with a darker palette, he shares his reflections and data on the human capacity to thwart development and even destroy it. *People of the Lie* is a candidly personal statement of belief in the reality of evil and a sustained argument for studying the phenomenon scientifically. It is at once instructive, persuasive — and distressingly idiosyncratic.

Peck is at his best in detecting the malicious side of certain patients he or his colleagues have treated. Characterized by "willfulness" rather than "willingness," such people stubbornly resist any change in the pattern of their destructive behavior. Refusing criticism from others or themselves, they become immured in narcissism and a desperate fear of detection. Their self-deception spreads, and the refusal to acknowledge it becomes their unpardonable sin, marking them out as "people of the lie," true children of the "father of lies."

The book's focus is on the evil in individuals, but there is also a long chapter on what the author calls "group evil." It centers on the My Lai massacre and the United States' involvement in the tragedy of Vietnam. Peck's judgment on our national responsibility is unequivocal but not harsh. Here, as in his evaluation of personal cases, his moral sense is signally compassionate, patient, and balanced. As in *The Road Less Traveled*, he knows the path of love as "a dynamic balance of opposites, a painful creative tension of uncertainties, a difficult tightrope between extreme but easier courses of action." In the earlier book, a pervasive grace arising from our personal unconscious empowers such love. Now its source is named quite explicitly as God the Father of Jesus Christ.

My distress over Peck's latest work is chiefly a result of his frequently uncritical theology. At the center of the book is his effort to identify evil as an illness. Sin is defined as falling short of the mark, evil as a force destructive of life or liveliness. Illness, on the other hand, is any bodily or personal impediment to fulfilling our human potential. But these are basically naturalistic definitions, admitting no real transcendence of the psychological order except in mythical terms. There is no horizon beyond the human. Yet without some sense of the transcendent life of God to which human life is called in communion, our fulfillment becomes a matter of self-improvement, more or less nobly conceived, and sin loses its radical meaning of being lost or fundamentally estranged.

It is no wonder, then, that the book has little sense for a religious history lived before God in community. It relies instead on the dramatic use of Johannine dualisms. The stark contrast between darkness and light, good and evil, is of course perennially revealing, and the figures of therapist and exorcist may rightly be recognized as modern heroes in the struggle. In Malachi Martin, Peck has chosen a curious witness for the church's practice of exorcism. More significantly, he needs to recognize the call to repentance and the experience of forgiveness which are ordinary, practical aspects of the Christian life confronted with the problem of evil.

On the other hand, we more explicitly ecclesial Christians may well wonder why we have not been able to make de-

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nominational church membership, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the communion of saints more compelling realities for a spirit as generous as Peck's. Is there such a torpor in our sacramental life, in our liturgy, even in our best spiritual direction that a person committed to healing can simply overlook them? In the end, one's dissatisfaction with this deeply felt book may turn into dissatisfaction with the level of one's own response to the Spirit's call to life.

Pro-choicers on pro-lifers (cont.)

(Continued from page 183)

dure. But knowing this does not make it any less disappointing that Connie Paige, an investigative reporter, and Andrew Merton, a director of a university journalism program, would pass up the opportunity to come to grips fairly and objectively with both the strengths and weaknesses of the "ultimate populists," as Ms. Paige calls the right-to-lifers.

Ten pages into either book is sufficient reading to persuade anyone without an axe to grind that neither Paige nor Merton has anything original to add to the discussion. Instead they are content to pander to the worst prejudices and most unfounded generalizations about the right-to-life community that circulate in liberal and left-liberal circles.

This is not a question of liking the movement or what it stands for. One needn't place much store in what right-to-lifers profess to believe to recognize that they must be touching something very vital if they are not only able to maintain themselves but flourish in the face of almost unremitting hostility from virtually every major source of power and authority in our culture. How much more productive a use of Paige's and Merton's time it would have been to drop the sneering, condescending tone and work to shed real light on the people Michael Harrington once described as the single authentic grass roots movement to emerge in the 1970s.

Professor Merton's principal contribution is to suggest that "at some level [!] right-to-lifers do not, in fact, regard the zygote, the embryo, or the fetus as fully human." Merton comes to this conclusion by (1) a relentlessly wrong-headed reading of an article in *NRL News* written by National Right to Life's general counsel, James Bopp,Jr., and (2) asserting that right-to-lifers, if they really meant what they said, would insist that women who abort be prosecuted for murder.

Merton shares with most violent critics of the right-to-life movement a complete misunderstanding of what is at its heart. Far from persecuting women the goals of the movement are both to assist women in their time of need and to save the lives of their unborn children by helping these women find other solutions to problem pregnancies.

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countless number of families who take in adolescent girls with unplanned pregnancies, the newest pro-life efforts to help women — the post-abortion counseling center — to name just a few. Of course, to acknowledge this thrust of the right-to-life movement would make the character assassination which passes for analysis of the movement untenable.

Which brings us to *The Right to Lifers*. Like Professor Merton, Ms. Paige is all speed and no altitude. She shares Merton's view that the right-to-life movement's talk about sanctity of all human life, mutual interdependence, and the responsibility we owe one another as fellow members of the human family is merely a smokescreen for what Merton calls its "true concern — the preservation of repressive puritanical sexual mores."

Since it is axiomatic to Paige that right-to-lifers are sexually repressed bigots willing to strike a Faustian bargain with the political equivalent of Mephistopheles, she must locate the origins of the movement in some putatively racist source that also allegedly proves the willingness of right-to-lifers to support other issues that later were to become part of the New Right agenda.

Since none of this even remotely resembles the truth, her assignment is no small order, even for an investigative reporter. Still, it can be done if one is prepared to turn history on its head and systematically misrepresent what people say and write.

Paige thus reveals that the movement did *not* really begin in the 1960s, a fact that even Merton acknowledges, but in the 1975 abortion manslaughter trial of Dr. Kenneth Edelin. The fact that Edelin is black is, by itself, a pretty thin thread by which to hang the movement on the charge of racism. But Paige rises to the occasion: "In the midst of all the furor, a curious thing happened. The right-to-lifers in Boston began establishing ties with the city's primary anti-busing organizations."

Holy paranoia, hold the presses! An anti-abortion, anti-busing coalition. . . we knew it all along. The problem arises when you look at Paige's evidence: a single op-ed piece written by syndicated columnist William Safire.

Unfortunately for Paige, Safire did not say these disparate groups were "establishing ties," as her very next sentence readily shows: "As William Safire noted in an op-ed article in the *New York Times*, busing and abortion were linked *in the sense* that they were both an expression of the resistance of local people to changes made at the national level over which they had no control" (emphasis added).

Having distorted Safire's fling at urban sociology, Paige compounds her error by asserting that this wholly spurious "outreach" between anti-abortionists and those who opposed busing was "the first sign of a coalition around what would come to be known as the 'social issues,' a cluster of concerns not traditionally the province of politics that affected people's day-to-day lives." (Actually the "social issue" had been widely recognized and written about a half decade before the Edelin case, most notably in Richard M. Scammon and Ben J. Wattenberg's *The Real Majority*.)

Having created a wholly imaginary coalition, Paige concludes with this ominous sentence: "Once having been noticed, the coalition closed its ranks, and it would be a long time before it emerged publicly again."

Factual errors fall like autumn leaves

(Continued on page 190)

DAVE ANDRUSKO *is the editor of the* National Right to Life News *and of the forthcoming book* To Rescue the Future.

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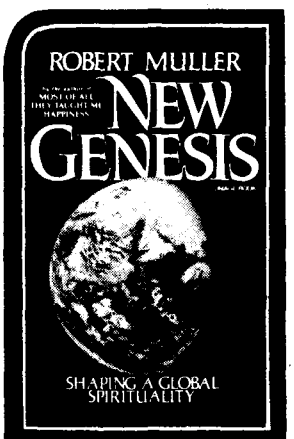

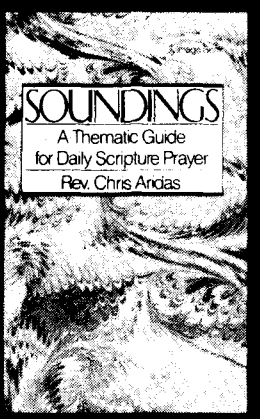

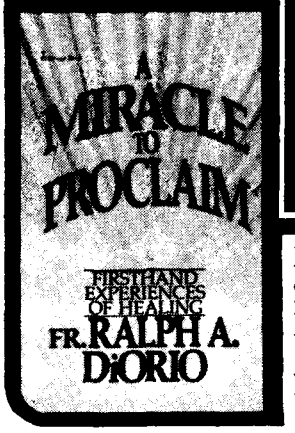

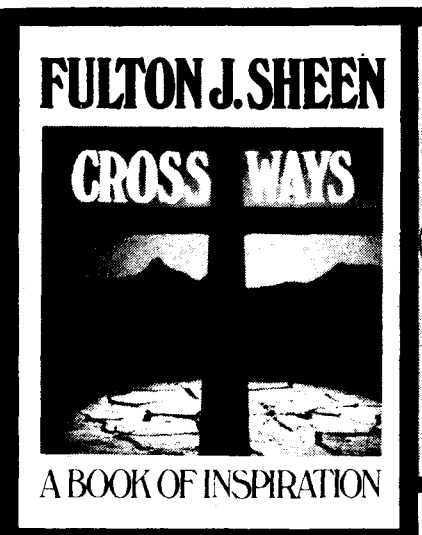

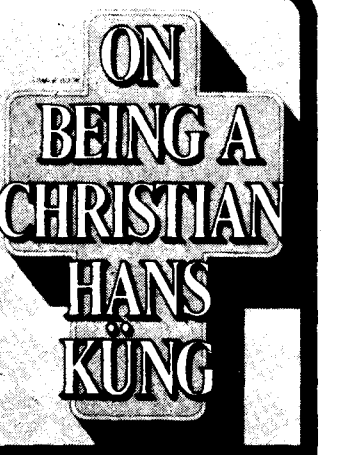

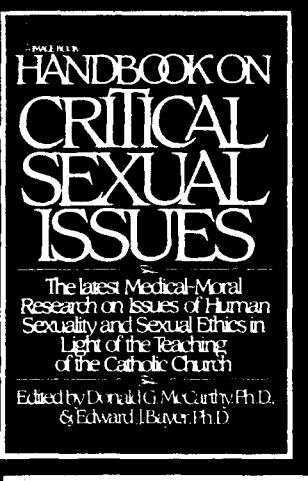
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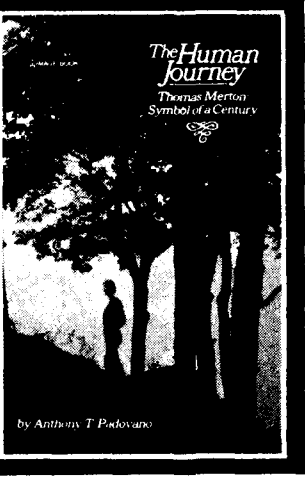

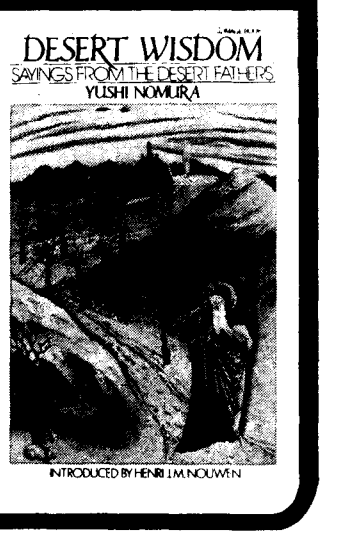

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from the pages of *The Right to Lifers*. People who vehemently oppose certain strategies are converted into supporters; a professional fundraiser who has raised millions of dollars is demoted to a bookkeeper and placed on a television program on which she never appeared; direct mail wizard Richard Viguerie is elevated from a county campaign manager to campaign manager for John Tower's successful 1960 senatorial race, and credited with converting William Buckley to the cause at some unspecified time in the mid-to-late seventies when, in fact, Buckley was writing anti-abortion columns in the 1960s. And on and on and on.

Paige is able to spin out theories of a New Right "putsch" of the right-to-life movement for the same reasons she can conjure up imaginary alliances. For one thing, the reader never is sure who or what she is referring to: "right-to-life" expands and contracts accordion-like to suit her purposes. For another, Paige wildly inflates the importance of marginal groups and imputes motives to people that they themselves would undoubtedly find strange.

Moreover, nothing is allowed to be taken at face value. Mildred Jefferson was elected president of the National Right-to-Life Committee (NRLC) not because she is dazzlingly articulate and a brilliant spokeswoman for unborn babies but because she is Protestant and, as a black and a woman, "was able to fend off charges of anti-feminism and racism" — the very unfounded charges created out of whole cloth by people like Paige.

Finally, she simply knows very little about politics. In 1980, NRLC's political action committee did not go after undefeatable pro-choicers nor spend a lot of money on pro-lifers who were shoo-ins, but instead focused on contested races that could be won, particularly in the cases of vulnerable pro-choice incumbents. This commonsensical strategy is offered as evidence that NRLC adopted the New Right's political methodology "wholesale." Need it be pointed out that if devoting one's primary attention only to races in which there is a chance of making a difference is adopting New Right methodology, then the Democratic party is also a client of the New Right?

It seems as if when writing about the right-to-life movement, not only do the gloves come off but respect for even minimal standards of accuracy and evidence is deemed unnecessary. Paradoxically, this may be because for all the ink spilled on the right-to-life movement, it is yet to be taken seriously.

By and large, most of the informational gatekeepers in our society, along with an overwhelming preponderance of our opinionmakers, do not grant to the movement the kind of ethical and moral stature necessary for it to be considered a voice worth listening to. By focusing on the alleged motives of right-to-lifers, the anti-anti-abortionist is able to evade the unsettling fact that we abort at least 1.6 million unborn humans every year.

Professor Merton would have us believe that the movement is "inherently extremist." Nothing could be further from the truth. A major reason the movement is pummeled the way it is, and provokes blind reactions like those in these books, is because it very accurately reflects not some outlandish doctrines but deeply felt values of its Middle American members.

Yet it is true that the right-to-life movement is radical. It is radical, as Richard Neuhaus has explained, "not by virtue of how far out it is but by virtue of how deep and central is the question it raises." That question, which Neuhaus says is the beginning of all moral judgment and all just law, "is simply this: Who, then, is my neighbor?"

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(Continued from page 162)

seemed appropriate for Father Hehir to apply those principles.

I hope the bishops' pastoral on peace will not become like some church documents which became historical records of brave principles which were never applied to contemporary life.

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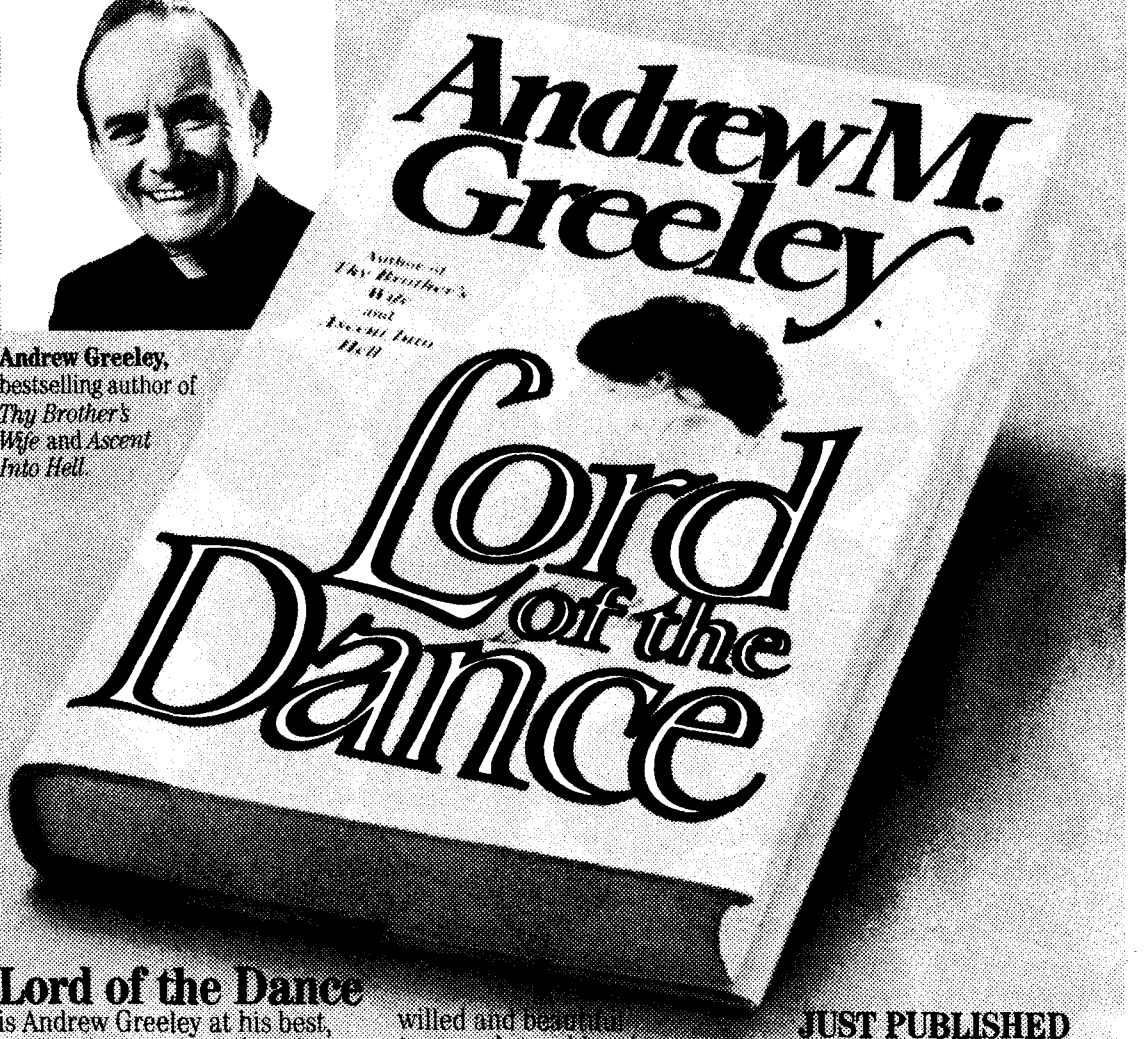

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Robert Coles on INTELLECTUALS

For many years, as I have worked, trying to understand how all sorts of families make do, often against considerable odds, I have written articles and books for interested fellow citizens. Soon enough, I have received the expected responses. But on one score I confess to perplexity, even alarm — an absence, almost total, of reaction when it comes to an entire side of my work. I refer to the descriptions I've rendered of the religious thoughts and feelings of the children and adults I've come to know.

All I need do, it seems, is come up with a social conclusion, make a psychological generalization, attempt a literary analysis, try portraying a certain kind of personal or regional life, and there are thoughtful (appreciatively or reprovingly so) correspondents willing to share their evaluations publicly. But when I have tried to describe how, say, an old Spanish-speaking woman from northern New Mexico, or a Southern black child, or an Appalachian white child, or a small-town working-class man happen to feel about Jesus and His words and deeds, then the result is either the silence already mentioned, or rarely, a puzzled, frustrated truculence: "I don't see why you get yourself into all that religious talk! If you're trying to prove that people are superstitious, or need a crutch, then a page is enough, not a chapter or half a book!"

In my own case, the attention given religious faith is held even more suspect because I'm a psychiatrist — and so, presumably, "educated" and "perceptive" enough (so I was told in another friendly letter!) to "know better"! I should be what an intellectual ought to be — someone who analyzes how others think and feel, who gives reasons for one or another moment of history. The civil rights struggle, for instance: I ought have kept my mind on the various "variables" that prompted it.

Meanwhile, there is this young man from Birmingham, Alabama, speaking in 1965: "I don't know why I said no to segregation. I'm just another white Southerner, and I wasn't brought up to love integration! But I was brought up to love Jesus Christ, and when I saw the police of this city use dogs on people, I asked myself what Jesus would have done — and that's all I know about how I came to be here, on the firing line!"

Intellectuals also need to document how people's beliefs prompt them to live their lives. And I fear that when I started doing that I learned something about myself and my kind — how arrogant and self-centered we risk becoming: interested in our own heady assertions, and anxious to be the spokespersons for all those others, who don't write and teach and come up with new ideas, but who rather, try to go from one day to the next, and who yes, in large numbers indeed, keep calling on Jesus, not the intellectuals, for guidance. —from the June 1982 **NEW OXFORD REVIEW**.

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